United Nations S/2013/113

Security Council

Distr.: General
26 February 2013

Original: English

Letter dated 25 February 2013 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit a letter dated 12 February 2013 from Mr. Dioncounda Traoré, interim President of the Republic of Mali (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would bring this letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) **BAN** Ki-moon

13-24352 (E) 260213 270213

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Annex

[Original: French]

I would first of all like to express my gratitude for your efforts aimed at the consolidation of peace and stability in Mali. Your decision to establish a multidisciplinary United Nations presence in Bamako demonstrates your full commitment to the Malian people.

As you know, the actions of the Malian armed forces, supported by the French armed forces, have led to the containment of the terrorist threat in Mali. The deployment of the African-led International Support Mission in Mali (AFISMA) will thus begin in this context.

However, the objective of liberating the territory of Mali has not yet been reached and peace has not yet been established. The presence of terrorists in one part of our territory also remains a threat to sub-regional and even international security.

It is therefore essential that the presence of the international community in Mali be designed to support first the restoration of territorial integrity, peace, and then the country's stabilization.

In that regard, I request your support for the rapid deployment of AFISMA in accordance with the provisions of United Nations Security Council resolution 2085 (2012) in order to restore the authority and sovereignty of the Malian State throughout its territory.

The achievement of these objectives will lead towards the transformation of AFISMA into a United Nations stabilization and peacekeeping operation.

Furthermore, we remain convinced of the need for political dialogue among Malians. The adoption of the road map on 29 January 2013 represents a decisive step forward in the political process that should lead to the holding of elections, which I hope will take place before 31 July, and the continuation of the inter-Malian political dialogue, including all the communities of northern Mali in respect for territorial integrity and secularism. It is important for the United Nations Office in Mali to support us in this process through a facilitation and advisory role. Moreover, we are very pleased with the cooperation we are developing with the multidisciplinary Office you have just established in Bamako.

Welcoming once again the willingness of the international community to assist Mali in coming through the current crisis, we hope that its efforts will continue in close collaboration with the Malian authorities. In that regard, I have the honour and pleasure to inform you that a high-level mission will travel in the coming days to Paris and New York to meet with the French authorities, yourself, the United Nations Secretariat and the members of the Security Council for the purpose of discussing matters relating to international support for Mali, including support from the United Nations.

(*Signed*) Dioncounda **Traoré**

United Nations S/2013/114

Security Council

Distr.: General
26 February 2013

Original: English

Identical letters dated 26 February 2013 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

After only three months of relative quiet, the citizens of Israel awoke again this morning to discover the horrific reality of terrorism from Gaza.

Earlier today, a rocket was fired at the Israeli city of Ashkelon. This is the first rocket that has been launched from Gaza since the conclusion of Operation Pillar of Defense in November 2012. The fragile calm that has prevailed over the past three months has been shattered.

This attack is an unacceptable breach of the ceasefire that ended our campaign against Hamas last year. Israel holds Hamas fully responsible for any attack that emanates from areas under its control. No country would sit idle as a terrorist organization played Russian roulette with the lives of its citizens.

The Security Council has a responsibility to help maintain the ceasefire between Israel and Gaza. I therefore urge the Council to condemn this violation of the ceasefire before the situation further escalates.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter distributed as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ron **Prosor**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

13-24367 (E) 260213

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United Nations A/67/763–S/2013/115

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
27 February 2013
English
Original: Arabic

General Assembly
Sixty-seventh session
Agenda item 36
The situation in the Middle East

Security Council
Sixty-eighth year

Identical letters dated 20 February 2013 from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I transmit herewith a statistical summary of Israeli violations of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) committed in January 2013 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the sixty-seventh session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 36, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Nawaf **Salam**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

13-24419 (E) 040313 080313

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Annex to the identical letters dated 20 February 2013 from the Permanent Representative of Lebanon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Land violations

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
3 January 2013	1200 1300	Medium machine-gun fire was heard coming from the Ruwaysat al-Alam position inside the occupied Shab'a Farms.
16 January 2013	1040	An Israeli enemy tank fired a shell, and several bursts of machine-gun fire from various types of weapons were heard, around the Ramta position inside the occupied Shab'a Farms.
	1330	Two Israeli enemy soldiers climbed onto the wall opposite Kafr Killa and observed Lebanese territory for 5 minutes.
17 January 2013	0730	Two Israeli enemy bulldozers crossed the technical fence east of Tallat al-Rahib, opposite the town of Ayta al-Sha'b. They reopened the dirt road and excavated an area of land opposite the technical fence.
20 January 2013	1000	A bulldozer and two Poclain excavators belonging to the Israeli enemy crossed the technical fence opposite the towns of Marun al-Ra's and Aytarun. They strengthened the earthen berms at the position of Jall al-Dayr, opposite Aytarun.
21 January 2013	1855	The Israeli enemy directed a searchlight from the Labunah-Jall al-Alam position towards Lebanese territory for 15 minutes.
23 January 2013	1720	An Israeli enemy patrol opposite Blida town photographed a Lebanese Army observation post in the Bi'r Shu'ayb area.
24 January 2013	1045	The Israeli enemy brought a crane to the Labunah-Jall al-Alam position, opposite the Lebanese Army position of Labunah. Three men climbed into the cabin suspended from the arm of the crane and were lifted to a height of some 15 metres, from which they photographed Lebanese territory.
	1150	Near the Labunah position, three Israeli enemy soldiers men climbed into the cabin suspended from the arm of a crane and were lifted to a height of some 15 metres, from which they photographed Lebanese territory.
27 January 2013	2220	An Israeli enemy patrol comprising three Hummer vehicles and two Merkava tanks opened a gate in the technical fence. The two tanks crossed the fence and positioned themselves behind the earthen berm opposite the Lebanese Army position of Maysat.
28 January 2013	0015	Four vans and one crane belonging to the Israeli enemy crossed the technical fence and set up an emplacement next to the earthen berm overlooking the Lebanese Army position of Maysat.

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
	2230	An Israeli enemy patrol comprising three soldiers and one Merkava tank crossed the technical fence and positioned itself behind an earthen berm opposite the Lebanese Army position of Maysat.
	2250	The Israeli enemy launched three six flare shells over Ramta and Summaqah inside the occupied Shab'a Farms.
29 January 2013	2350	Two Israeli enemy Merkava tanks crossed the technical fence and positioned themselves behind an earthen berm opposite the Lebanese Army position of Maysat.

Sea violations

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
23 January 2013	0630	The Israeli navy accosted two vessels that were conducting a seismological survey off the Lebanese coast, requesting them to specify their location. The vessels replied specifying their location within Lebanese territorial waters three nautical miles west of Ra's al-Naqurah.
24 January 2013	0540 0555	The Israeli enemy directed a searchlight from within occupied Palestinian territory towards Lebanese airspace and territorial waters.
	2200 2320	An Israeli enemy launch directed a searchlight for 45 seconds towards Lebanese territorial waters in the region of buoy No. 1.
27 January 2013	1800	An Israeli enemy launch directed a searchlight for 15 seconds towards Lebanese territorial waters in the region of buoy No. 1.
	1815	An Israeli enemy launch directed a searchlight for 15 seconds towards Lebanese territorial waters in the region of the buoys.

Air violations

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
1 January 2013	0745	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Alma al-Sha'b. It circled over the South before leaving at 1520 hours over Rumaysh.
	0950	Four Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 1100 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
	1110	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Naqurah. It circled over the South before leaving at 1800 hours over Naqurah.

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
3 January 2013	0730	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Alma al-Sha'b. It circled over the South and the Western Bekaa before leaving at 1620 hours over Rumaysh.
	1012	Four Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Naqurah. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 1210 hours over Rumaysh.
	1120	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over the sea off Shikka. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 1225 hours over Rumaysh.
	1210	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Alma al-Sha'b. It circled over the South before leaving at 1900 hours over Rumaysh.
4 January 2013	0615	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Naqurah. It circled over the South before leaving at 1640 hours over Rumaysh.
	1000	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Naqurah. It circled over the South, Riyaq and Baalbek before leaving at 1725 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
7 January 2013	1720	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 1900 hours over Naqurah.
11 January 2013	1305	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 1450 hours over Rumaysh.
12 January 2013	0610	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Naqurah. It circled over Beirut, the Shuf, Riyaq, Baalbek and the South before leaving at 1800 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
13 January 2013	0700	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Naqurah. It circled over the South before leaving at 1720 hours over Naqurah.
	0715	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Naqurah. It circled over the South before leaving at 1740 hours over Naqurah.
	1020	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 1220 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
	1400	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Rumaysh. It circled over the South before leaving at 1750 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
14 January 2013	0620	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Aytarun. It circled over the South, Riyaq and Baalbek before leaving at 1700 hours over Kafr Killa.
	0705	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. It circled over the South before leaving at 1600 hours over Naqurah.
15 January 2013	0945	Four Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over the sea off Naqurah. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 1145 hours over the sea off Shikka towards Turkey.
	1022	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over the sea off Shikka. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 1115 hours over Kafr Killa.
	1025	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. It circled over the South before leaving at 1320 hours over Rumaysh.
	1100	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 1210 hours over Kafr Killa.
	1120	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Rumaysh. They circled over Beirut and the South before leaving at 1205 hours over Naqurah.
	1140	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Alma al-Sha'b. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 1205 hours over Naqurah.
17 January 2013	1035	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 1225 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
	1100	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Alma al-Sha'b. It circled over the South before leaving at 1955 hours over Rumaysh.
	1200	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Alma al-Sha'b. It circled over Beirut before leaving at 1755 hours over Naqurah.
18 January 2013	0730	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Naqurah. it circled over Beirut and its suburbs, Riyaq and Baalbek before leaving at 1755 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
	1010	Israeli enemy military aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, circling over the South before leaving at 1215 hours.

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
	1155	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Alma al-Sha'b. It circled over the South before leaving at 1450 hours over Kafr Killa.
19 January 2013	0925	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Alma al-Sha'b. It circled over the South, Riyaq and Baalbek before leaving at 1840 hours over Naqurah.
21 January 2013	0645	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Naqurah. It circled over Riyaq and Baalbek before leaving at 1830 hours over Kafr Killa.
	0850	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Alma al-Sha'b. It circled over the South, Hirmil and Qulay'at before leaving at 1830 hours over Rumaysh.
	1110	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 1220 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
	1145	Four Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 1245 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
	2030	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. It circled over Riyaq and Baalbek before leaving at 0320 hours on 22 January over Naqurah.
	2030	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 2130 hours over Naqurah.
22 January 2013	1825	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 2005 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
	2000	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Rumaysh. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 2210 hours over the sea west of Naqurah.
	2200	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 0010 hours on 23 January over the sea west of Naqurah.
	2347	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Alma al-Sha'b. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 0220 hours on 23 January over Alma al-Sha'b.
23 January 2013	0015	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. It circled over Riyaq and the Western Bekaa before leaving at 0535 hours over Rumaysh.

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
	0200	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Rumaysh. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 0520 hours over the sea west of Naqurah.
	0510	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Alma al-Sha'b. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 0735 hours over the sea west of Naqurah.
	0510	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. It circled over the Bekaa before leaving at 1035 hours over Kafr Killa.
	0825	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over the sea off Naqurah. They circled over the sea off Shikka before leaving at 1040 hours over the sea west of Naqurah.
	0940	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Rumaysh. It circled over the Bekaa before leaving at 1730 hours over Rumaysh.
	1055	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over the sea off Jubayl. They circled over the sea off Shikka and Jubayl before leaving at 1505 hours over the sea off Naqurah.
	1140	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 1300 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
	1520	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Alma al-Sha'b. It circled over the Bekaa before leaving at 2120 hours over Rumaysh.
	1945	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Rumaysh. It circled over the Bekaa before leaving at 0510 hours on 24 January over Alma al-Sha'b.
24 January 2013	0400	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Rumaysh. It circled over Riyaq and Baalbek before leaving at 0130 hours on 25 January over Rumaysh.
	0630	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over the sea off Jubayl. They circled over the Jubayl and Tripoli coastline before leaving at 0800 hours over the sea west of Naqurah.
	1040	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. It circled over the Western Bekaa and Beirut before leaving at 1900 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
25 January 2013	0020	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Rumaysh. It circled over Riyaq and Baalbek before leaving at 0640 hours over Kafr Killa.

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
	0750	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 0905 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
	1050	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 1250 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
	1220	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Rumaysh. It circled over Riyaq and Baalbek before leaving at 2105 hours over Rumaysh.
	1700	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Naqurah. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 1910 hours over Naqurah.
	1920	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Naqurah. It circled over Riyaq and Baalbek before leaving at 2350 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
26 January 2013	0001	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Naqurah. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 0320 hours over Naqurah.
	1300	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 1440 hours over Kafr Killa.
	1315	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over the sea off Naqurah. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 1455 hours over Kafr Killa.
	1905	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. They circled over the sea west of Shikka before leaving at 2115 hours over the sea west of Naqurah.
27 January 2013	0020	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. They circled over the sea off Shikka before leaving at 0300 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
	0715	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over the sea off Tyre. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 0940 hours over Rumaysh.
	1210	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Naqurah. It circled over Riyaq and Baalbek before leaving at 1700 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
	1540	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. It circled over Riyaq and Baalbek before leaving at 0230 hours on 28 January over Rumaysh.

Date	Time	Nature of violation
	1600	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over the sea west of Naqurah. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 1825 hours over Rumaysh.
	2100	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Alma al-Sha'b. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 2310 hours over the sea west of Naqurah.
28 January 2013	0235	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. It circled over Riyaq, Baalbek, the Shuf and the South before leaving at 1010 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
	0825	An Israeli enemy reconnaissance aircraft violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Naqurah. It circled over the South before leaving at 1530 hours over Rumaysh.
	0955	Four Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Rumaysh. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 1215 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
	1735	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 1835 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
	1940	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 2110 hours over Naqurah.
29 January 2013	0110	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Rumaysh and leaving at 0125 hours over the sea off Shikka.
	0710	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Rumaysh. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 1040 hours over Naqurah.
	0935	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 1300 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
	1135	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 1440 hours over Alma al-Sha'b.
	1310	Four Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Kafr Killa. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 1630 hours over Kafr Killa.
	1630	Four Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Rumaysh. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 2105 hours over Naqurah.

Date	*Time*	*Nature of violation*
	2105	Four Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Naqurah. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 0200 hours on 30 January over Naqurah.
30 January 2013	0200	Four Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Naqurah. They circled over all regions of Lebanon before leaving at 0755 hours over the sea off Naqurah.
	0830	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Naqurah and leaving at 0855 hours over the sea off Naqurah.
	0905	Two Israeli enemy warplanes violated Lebanese airspace, entering over Naqurah. They circled over the sea between Naqurah and Tripoli before leaving at 1045 hours over the sea off Naqurah.

United Nations S/2013/116

Security Council

Distr.: General
26 February 2013

Original: English

Letter dated 26 February 2013 from the Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I write to you in reference to document S/2013/10 dated 2 January 2013, regarding matters of which the Security Council is seized and the stage reached in their consideration.

I have the honour to inform you that, upon instructions of my Government, the United Kingdom requests the retention of the following item, listed in paragraph 3 of the above-mentioned document, on the list of matters of which the Security Council is seized:

79. The situation in Myanmar.

I should be grateful if you would circulate this letter as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Mark **Lyall Grant**

13-24374 (E) 270213

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United Nations A/67/758–S/2013/117

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
28 February 2013

Original: English

General Assembly
Sixty-seventh session
Agenda items 33 and 39

Security Council
Sixty-eighth year

Prevention of armed conflict

The situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan

Letter dated 25 February 2013 from the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I am writing to share with you my profound concern regarding a false and offensive ad campaign recently launched by the Azerbaijani side. Regrettably, during recent years, the Azerbaijani leadership is using the tragedy of Khojalu in order to dramatically increase the anti-Armenian propaganda, inside and outside of the United Nations.

I have learned of this matter through a press release issued by the Azerbaijani American Alliance, announcing its far-reaching marketing campaign of spreading long-discredited lies about Armenia and racist and prejudiced stereotypes about Armenians (available from http://azerbaijanamericaalliance.org/photo-gallery/2013-khojaly-commemoration).

Beyond this unacceptable interference in the civic life of New York City, which hosts the United Nations Headquarters and the largest number of permanent missions of Member States, I am deeply troubled by the factual twists and ethnic bias at the core of this so-called public awareness campaign conducted by the Government of Azerbaijan through its public relations client.

Such a deplorable undertaking sponsored by Azerbaijan breeds xenophobia and hatred, and undermines the hopes and aspirations for enduring peace among nations based on truth and justice.

Azerbaijan is consistently misrepresenting and distorting the reality of the Khojalu events of 1992, which, according to the testimonies of various international organizations and high-level Azerbaijani officials, including the then President, Ayaz Mutalibov, were organized by the Azerbaijani "Popular Front" opposition group in order to oust the Azerbaijani leadership of that time. Further details on the reality of those events are revealed in a number of United Nations documents

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circulated by the Permanent Mission of Armenia, the latest contained in A/66/708-S/2012/117, dated 27 February 2012.

Resorting to such actions, Azerbaijan tries to disguise its wrongdoings and evade responsibility for militarizing the Nagorno Karabakh issue. If Azerbaijan is keen on helping Azerbaijanis and Armenians to find a peace and resolution to the conflict, it would do better to direct its energy and the resources wasted on such a groundless and provocative "public awareness campaign" towards constructive participation in the negotiation process led by the Co-Chairs of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Minsk Group.

I request that this letter be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 33 and 39, and of the Security Council and be considered as a response to deceitful interpretations of the tragic events in Khojalu by the representatives of Azerbaijan during the open debate of the Security Council on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, held on 12 February 2013.

(*Signed*) Garen **Nazarian**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

United Nations S/2013/118

Security Council

Distr.: General
27 February 2013

Original: English

Tenth report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolutions 1886 (2009), 1941 (2010), 2005 (2011) and 2065 (2012), in which the Council requested me to submit a report on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL), as well as on detailed proposals and a recommended timeline for the transition, drawdown and exit strategy of UNIPSIL following the review by an inter-agency technical assessment mission deployed by me to Sierra Leone. The report covers the period from 1 September 2012 to 28 February 2013 and includes recommendations concerning residual tasks and timelines for the transition, drawdown and exit strategy of UNIPSIL.

II. Major developments

2. The key event dominating the period under review was the holding of the presidential, parliamentary and local council elections in Sierra Leone on 17 November 2012. The elections, the third since the end of the civil war in 2002, were considered, both nationally and internationally, to be a success for the people of Sierra Leone and its institutions.

A. Political developments

3. The main political developments were all related to the period before, during and after the national elections. Election campaigning was conducted from 17 October to 15 November, in accordance with a detailed schedule prepared by the National Electoral Commission. Each political party was allocated specific campaign days. Political parties were able to campaign in all parts of the country, although there were a few instances of misconduct and minor incidents of political intolerance during the campaign period, which were effectively handled by the Sierra Leone Police.

4. In keeping with the political antecedents in the country, the main contestants in the elections were the opposition party, Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), and the ruling All People's Congress (APC). The other eight political parties contesting the elections were the People's Movement for Democratic Change (PMDC), the

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National Democratic Alliance (NDA), the Revolutionary United Front Party (RUFP), the People's Democratic Party (PDP), the Citizens Democratic Party (DCP), the Peace and Liberation Party (PLP), the United National People's Party (UNP) and the United Democratic Movement (UDM). The National Democratic Alliance was unable to field a presidential candidate as it did not meet the National Electoral Commission deadline for all registered parties to present and obtain approval of the nomination of their flag-bearers and running mates.

5. There were no major incidents of political violence on polling day and, overall, the elections were conducted in an atmosphere of calm and in an orderly manner. Voter turnout was 87 per cent of the 2.6 million voters registered under the biometric voter registration system. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the African Union, the Commonwealth, the European Union, the Carter Center and National Election Watch, a coalition of local civil society organizations which observed the polling and counting, concluded that the elections were largely peaceful, credible and transparent, notwithstanding some organizational difficulties, including the late opening of some polling stations and the late delivery of electoral materials.

6. On 23 November, the National Electoral Commission announced that President Ernest Bai Koroma of the ruling APC had secured almost 59 per cent of the votes cast in the presidential elections and that (retired) Brigadier General Julius Maada Bio of SLPP had won 37 per cent of the votes. The other seven presidential candidates secured the remaining votes. In accordance with the 1991 Constitution, there was no need for a run-off presidential election since one of the candidates, in this case President Ernest Bai Koroma, had obtained at least 55 per cent of the votes cast. President Koroma was sworn into office on 23 November. His inauguration was held on 22 February 2013.

7. On 26 November 2012 and 10 February 2013 respectively, the National Electoral Commission announced the results of the parliamentary and local council elections. According to the results, the ruling APC increased its parliamentary majority from 59 to 68 seats, while SLPP secured 42 seats, down from its previously held 43 seats. The results for two parliamentary seats in Kailahun and Kenema districts, in the eastern region, were not announced by the Commission because of legal challenges involving some of the candidates running for the seats. The ruling party won 10 of the 19 local council seats in the country and SLPP won 9 seats. On 10 February 2013, the Commission announced that APC had won the parliamentary election in "Constituency 92" in the Western Area Rural district, which had been postponed owing to the death of the PMDC candidate just before the November 2012 elections.

8. Immediately following the elections, SLPP alleged that several electoral irregularities had occurred. These included the absence of voter registers in some areas in the northern region, which is the political stronghold of APC; the use of pre-marked ballots in favour of the ruling APC; and the intimidation of SLPP supporters by the police. In a statement issued on 18 November, SLPP declared that it would not accept the results of the presidential election owing to these irregularities. During this period, my Executive Representative and partners from the international community maintained close contacts with SLPP, urging calm and stressing the importance of resolving its concerns through legal mechanisms.

9. On 30 November, SLPP filed a petition in the Supreme Court of Sierra Leone challenging the conduct of the presidential election by the National Electoral Commission. On 3 December, President Koroma and (retired) Brigadier General Bio met and issued a joint statement by APC and SLPP advising that the election of President Ernest Bai Koroma was no longer in contention. SLPP also called upon the Government to release the SLPP supporters who had been arrested for public order offences connected with demonstrations in the southern and eastern parts of the country following the announcements of the election results. SLPP also reversed its earlier decision forbidding its newly elected parliamentarians and local councillors to participate in the work of the Parliament and the local councils. However, in a statement on 1 January 2013 and on subsequent occasions, SLPP declared that it would not accept the presidential election results.

10. After being sworn into office, President Koroma commenced the process of nominating the members of his new Cabinet, who have since been approved by Parliament. On 16 December, the President addressed the State Opening of the first session of the Fourth Parliament and articulated the priorities of his Government, which include constitutional reform, economic diversification, natural resources management, human development, international competitiveness, employment and labour, social protection, governance, gender equality, women's empowerment and youth employment.

B. Technical arrangements in support of the elections

11. Technical and financial assistance was provided to Sierra Leone's electoral management bodies through the Elections Basket Fund managed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with contributions from the European Union, Germany, Ireland, Japan, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United Nations. The establishment of regional tallying centres equipped with data processing facilities was completed in the three provincial headquarter towns of Bo, Kenema and Makeni. The centres improved the computation and early announcement of the election results.

12. The National Electoral Commission hired and trained over 70,000 temporary polling staff for the elections. It also established more than 9,440 polling stations throughout the country. Voter education processes, with assistance from the UNDP-managed Elections Basket Fund, were intensified in the reporting period through the use of radio jingles and dramatic sketches. To ensure greater voter participation in the electoral processes, voter registration cards were also distributed by the Commission from 6 to 10 September. On 7 November, the Commission destroyed about 80,000 faulty voter registration cards in a ceremony witnessed by national and international election observers.

1. Electoral offences

13. On 19 and 20 October, the Law Officers Department in the Office of the Attorney General and Ministry of Justice arranged training programmes on electoral offences for about 200 police and prison officers as well as National Electoral Commission staff. A total of 94 cases relating to double registration were dealt with by the High Court of Sierra Leone, resulting in 83 convictions and 7 acquittals.

Three cases are pending and one was discharged owing to lack of evidence. There are currently seven cases pending before the Electoral Offences Courts.

2. Election security

14. With technical and advisory support from UNIPSIL, the security sector agencies prepared and implemented a comprehensive security plan for the elections. About 12,000 police officers, supported by personnel from the National Fire Force, the Chiefdom Police and the Immigration Service, were deployed in polling stations throughout the country. The Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) provided safety and logistical support to the Sierra Leone Police within the framework of the Military Aid to Civil Power Policy. On polling day, the police imposed a ban on vehicular movement in some of the regions. The ban was largely respected and assisted in maintaining law and order. Eight additional United Nations Police officers, who were deployed to Sierra Leone from July to December 2012, assisted in monitoring the professional conduct, operational independence and neutrality of the Sierra Leone Police.

3. Support to civil society and non-State actors

15. Through the non-State actors project, which is funded by the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund, UNIPSIL engaged a wide spectrum of local groups to build consensus for political tolerance and non-violence during the electoral process. In all 112 of the country's constituencies, civil society organizations developed and disseminated audio and video peace messages in local languages using ex-combatants.

16. On 26 September, with assistance from UNIPSIL, the National Commission for Democracy issued the Declaration of 18 May 2012, which articulates the roles and responsibilities of major local stakeholders, such as youth and women's groups, including the All Political Parties Youth Association and the All Political Parties Women's Association, the Police and the political parties, in the electoral process. With the engagement of UNIPSIL, the National Council of Paramount Chiefs and the Interreligious Council for Sierra Leone held discussions with the police and electoral management bodies to address their concerns, such as the neutrality of the security sector agencies and paramount chiefs in the electoral process.

C. Security developments

17. The overall security situation in the country was calm during the reporting period. On 22 September, the Sierra Leone National Commission for Small Arms organized the destruction of 4,773 rifles and guns accumulated between 2004 and 2007 under the UNDP arms for development project.

18. Following a request by the Government of Sierra Leone in June 2012, my Executive Representative has been coordinating support from key international partners for ongoing national efforts in the area of security sector reform. On 17 December, two people were shot dead by the police during disturbances arising from a dispute by workers of a mining company in Koidu, Kono district. This incident, which is under investigation by the Government, coupled with similar past isolated incidents, underlines the need to strengthen command and control, as well as accountability mechanisms in the police, including through the establishment of the proposed independent police complaints mechanism.

III. Socioeconomic developments and activities of the United Nations country team

19. Real gross domestic product (GDP) in 2013 is expected to be 15 per cent and will be sustained, mainly owing to the start-up of two large iron ore mines in 2011 and 2012 in Tonkolili and Port Loko districts (Northern Province). Other factors supporting the growth in real GDP include the Government's smallholder commercialization scheme, which stimulated agriculture and increased spending on infrastructure development that provided a boost to the construction and services sectors. The trade deficit is forecast to decrease to $121 million or 12 per cent of GDP in 2013 from an estimated deficit of $589 million or 24 per cent of GDP in 2012.

20. The macroeconomic framework for 2013 and beyond is anchored on a sustainable fiscal path with domestic financing of the budget at around 1 per cent of GDP. Fiscal consolidation efforts will continue to be important. In this respect, the Government's goals include creating fiscal space for high priority public investments with a view to stimulating long-term growth and development, as well as ensuring sustainable debt levels. Since inflation is declining and is estimated to attain a single digit of 8 per cent in 2013, monetary policy in 2013 and beyond will continue to target price stability. The exchange rate has also been stable and was strongly supported by capital inflows, notably foreign direct investment in the mining sector.

21. Regarding the "Agenda for Prosperity", Sierra Leone's third poverty reduction strategy paper covering 2013 to 2017, the Government has continued consultations among relevant counterparts aimed at prioritizing projects in each of the eight identified pillars. The United Nations and other development partners are supporting the formulation of the various pillars. The Department for International Development of the United Kingdom, the World Bank and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) are assisting in developing the poverty reduction strategy paper III results framework for tracking its implementation as well as the national monitoring and evaluation system. Serving as co-chair of the Development Partnership Committee with the Government of Sierra Leone, my Executive Representative is supporting the overall coordination of international partners, as well as the coherence and costing of the poverty reduction strategy paper. Civil society representatives received briefings in December 2012 on aspects of the Agenda for Prosperity and plans are under way to launch regional consultations in February 2013 with various stakeholders to increase and promote awareness of the poverty reduction strategy paper III.

22. In support of the Government's free health-care programme for pregnant women, lactating mothers and children under the age of five, UNICEF, with funding from the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom and the European Union, continued to assist in the procurement and distribution of essential lifesaving drugs to over 1,000 primary health-care units. Also in collaboration with the World Bank, UNICEF began developing the social protection strategy and an implementation plan aimed at the most vulnerable communities. It is planning to pilot a cash transfer scheme in some districts. With financial assistance from the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom, the Central Emergency Response Fund and the African Development Bank, the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF embarked on the distribution of water purifying

tablets and intravenous fluids, as well as awareness-raising activities to combat the spread of cholera.

23. As a result of the smallholder commercialization programme implemented with technical support from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the food security situation in the country is improving. In this regard, there are indications that local rice production is increasing with a consequent reduction in rice imports.

IV. Advancing peacebuilding

24. During the reporting period, the Peacebuilding Commission closely followed preparations for the 2012 elections and continued to advocate for the conduct of free, fair and peaceful elections. The Chair of the Commission's Sierra Leone configuration briefed the Security Council on 12 September on its activities relating to the elections, possible support to UNIPSIL and the United Nations country team during the post-election transition, and sustaining international assistance to meet Sierra Leone's political and economic priorities. On the eve of the elections, on 15 November, the Commission issued a statement calling upon all national stakeholders to strive to ensure peaceful and impartial elections. On 12 December, the Commission was briefed by my Executive Representative on the conduct of the elections. Subsequently, the Commission issued a statement commending the people and institutions of Sierra Leone on the culmination of a successful electoral process. The Commission stressed the important work ahead to consolidate peace and urged the international community to provide coordinated and coherent support to Sierra Leone.

25. During the reporting period, the Commission also conducted its periodic review of progress in peacebuilding in Sierra Leone. The review was based on the second and last joint progress report on the Agenda for Change prepared by the Government in consultation with its international partners and endorsed by the Parliament.

26. The Commission visited Sierra Leone from 15 to 20 February 2013 to discuss its future engagement in the country with national and international counterparts. It plans to brief the Security Council on its findings in March 2013.

V. Main risks to peacebuilding

A. Drug trafficking

27. The Sierra Leone Transnational Organized Crime Unit continued to lead efforts aimed at combating illicit drug trafficking and other forms of international organized crime. In 2012, the Unit reportedly carried out 13 law enforcement operations and investigated 52 cases, including 17 cases of illicit drug trafficking and possession, 5 cases of fraud, financial crimes and money-laundering, 15 cases of larceny and forgery and 1 case of piracy. National capabilities for critical information exchange with other countries, such as Colombia, Guinea, Liberia, Spain and the United Kingdom, have been significantly increased. UNIPSIL, in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC),

continued to provide mentoring, on-the-job training and technical advisory support to the Transnational Organized Crime Unit.

B. Youth

28. In a number of pronouncements, the new Government restated its commitment to tackling youth unemployment and outlined several proposals, including on skills acquisition and the formulation of suitable educational curriculums tailored for the country's employment requirements. Programmatic interventions by UNDP in this area continued in the period under review, including a graduate internship programme, and career and employment advisory units. However, the Government's initiatives will need to be supplemented by an increase in pre-university school entrants and more vocational training and by addressing capacity and institutional gaps. The proposals could also benefit from further coordination of national stakeholders involved in youth issues and a holistic and cross-cutting approach to policy formulation. The International Labour Organization (ILO) and the World Bank are currently providing technical assistance in this area. While international partners should continue to provide assistance, the solution must be found in large-scale interventions, which only the Government can instigate.

C. Corruption

29. The Sierra Leone Anti-Corruption Commission continued its work on education, prevention and enforcement. Its national anti-corruption strategy secretariat held a validation workshop on 15 November 2012 to engage Government entities in the monitoring exercise carried out by civil society groups. In October, the Commission presented two cheques totalling 2.06 billion leones (about $4.2 million), which had been recovered from corrupt individuals, to the Government's Consolidated Revenue Fund. On 7 December, the Commission announced that Sierra Leone ranked 123 out of the 176 countries surveyed in the Transparency International Corruption Perception Index, as opposed to 134 in 2011. The Commission further stated that the country had improved its rankings with a score of 31 and was making steady progress. Other positive developments in the period under review include a number of successful investigations and prosecutions of public employees involved in corrupt activities. On 17 December, the former Minister for Health was convicted of a number of corrupt practices, such as abuse of office and failure to comply with procurement guidelines. Four public officers were also convicted of corrupt practices and 10 others were indicted during the same period. On 29 January 2013, the Government announced the suspension of 10 senior staff of the Ministry of Health and Sanitation pending investigations into the suspected misuse of funds made available by the GAVI Alliance, a public-private partnership that supports vaccinations for children in developing countries. The Commission is also currently investigating an amount of $1 million provided by GAVI, which allegedly has not been properly accounted for by the Ministry.

VI. Support to and activities of democratic institutions

A. National Electoral Commission

30. In preparation for the elections, the National Electoral Commission received support from the UNDP-managed Elections Basket Fund and bilateral partners. The Government of Nigeria donated 24 vehicles to the Commission to improve its logistics capability and provided $1 million for election activities. It also deployed information technology experts to assist in the electoral arrangements. On 13 December, the Government of China donated 32 laptops, 3 electricity generators, 18 motorbikes and 3 vans to the Commission.

B. Political Parties Registration Commission

31. During the reporting period, the Political Parties Registration Commission monitored the conduct of political parties with a view to ensuring compliance with the Political Parties' Code of Conduct of 20 October 2006. The Government provided funding to enable the Commission to recruit additional personnel to carry out its activities. The Commission held several consultative meetings with political parties and engaged in the resolution of intra-party disputes. It also played a critical role in resolving disagreements over the candidates' nomination fees for the 2012 elections. Working closely with UNIPSIL, it continued to encourage peaceful elections through, inter alia, its engagement with political parties and the implementation of cross-party activities by the All Political Parties Youth Association and the All Political Parties Women's Association geared towards promoting a shared understanding of the political process and the development of conflict resolution mechanisms.

C. Independent Media Commission

32. On 26 September 2012, the Independent Media Commission suspended the licences of two media houses for one month for publishing indecent material, which they subsequently challenged in the High Court. UNIPSIL offered legal support to the Commission in the interpretation of its regulatory authority since Parliament is yet to enact a revised Independent Media Commission Act. With technical advice from UNIPSIL, the Commission worked with the Guild of Editors to foster a degree of self-regulation of the media. It facilitated skills-training workshops aimed at encouraging coverage of key political, economic and social issues and put in place a media monitoring mechanism to deter hate speech. On 5 October, and in coordination with the Commission, UNIPSIL organized a round table attended by representatives of the Guild of Editors, the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation and other media organizations, during which the need for the media to play a positive role in the elections was underlined. Notwithstanding these efforts, the Commission still requires further strengthening of its capacity, including with respect to the recruitment of experts in critical areas, stronger engagement with the media and the early passage of the revised Independent Media Commission Act to enhance its regulatory authority.

D. The Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation

33. With support from UNIPSIL and the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund, the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation established an Elections Unit in September 2012 to cover the electoral process. The Corporation deployed an additional 80 staff throughout the country. While the Corporation's coverage of electoral activities was positive, the major opposition party, SLPP, expressed concern that undue prominence had been given to the ruling party.

E. Parliament

34. In the light of the 17 November elections, Parliament closed on 24 September. The new Parliament was formally inaugurated on 15 December. UNDP organized a one-day orientation programme on parliamentary procedural issues for the newly elected members, who constitute about 70 per cent of the intake. UNDP also facilitated training for newly recruited parliamentary staff.

F. Decentralization

35. Much progress was made in the decentralization process. Some 56 of the 80 functions, including in the areas of health and education, performed by central institutions were transferred to local councils. The Government further pledged to commit to the decentralization process by reviewing the Local Government Act, 2004 and providing direct financial assistance to local councils. It also indicated that additional councils would be created during the new APC administration.

36. The Decentralization Secretariat of the Government of Sierra Leone continued to undertake activities, with assistance from the Decentralized Delivery Service Programme funded by the World Bank, aimed at boosting the decentralization and devolution process. It conducted training in environmental and social safeguards for designated officers from 10 to 13 October 2012 in Bo (Southern Province) and provided computer equipment. Training was also provided on monitoring and evaluation procedures to over 60 staff of local councils, as well as to personnel of State institutions from 30 October to 3 November. As part of the monitoring evaluation processes, initiatives to allow local communities to evaluate service delivery through the use of scorecards commenced during the period under review.

VII. Human rights and rule of law

A. Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone

37. On 26 September, the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone released its report on the alleged human rights violations committed by the police during demonstrations by miners in Bumbuna, Tonkolili district (Northern Province) in June 2012 over conditions of service, which resulted in the death of one person and serious injuries to several others. The report concluded that there had been a disproportionate use of force by the police, as well as instances of sexual and gender-based violence. The Human Rights Commission issued several recommendations, including the early establishment of an independent police

complaints committee, and requested an apology by the police, which has been provided.

B. International treaty reporting

38. With support from UNIPSIL, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Justice completed and submitted Sierra Leone's initial periodic report on implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (CCPR/C/SLE/1). The second periodic report on the implementation of the Convention against Torture has been submitted (CAT/C/SLE/2).

C. Persons with disabilities

39. UNIPSIL provided assistance to electoral management bodies aimed at ensuring the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the political process through training programmes organized in Bo and Makeni (Southern and Northern Provinces) on 10 and 13 October. In a very welcome development, a visually impaired deputy minister was appointed in the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs.

D. Technical cooperation

40. On 6 and 7 November, capacity-building workshops were organized by UNIPSIL for staff in four district councils in the Southern Province through the human rights-based approach programme. Plans of action were adopted at the conclusion of the training. Also on 6 November, UNIPSIL held training workshops for civil society on shadow reporting for treaty bodies, with a particular focus on reporting for such human rights treaty bodies as the Human Rights Committee (which monitors implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights) and the Committee against Torture.

E. Gender issues

41. During the elections, women played a critical role in the monitoring of the electoral process through the Women's Situation Room and deployed over 300 observers throughout the country. The work of the Women's Situation Room was supported by the United Nations country team with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) in the lead. With regard to women's political participation, the National Electoral Commission confirmed a very high turnout of women voters (more than 50 per cent) in the 2012 elections. However, efforts by the All Political Parties Women's Association, supported by the United Nations and other women's groups, to achieve a minimum 30 per cent quota for women in Parliament fell short. There has been a slight decline in the number of women parliamentarians from 16 in the previous Parliament to 15, with 8 from APC and 7 from SLPP. President Koroma recently reiterated his commitment to promoting gender equality and the political participation of women, including through the enactment of legislation on the 30 per cent quota for women and the proposed constitutional review process.

42. In September 2012, UNIPSIL and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) provided funds for establishing two information desks in magistrate courts in Freetown and Kenema that will provide guidance and information on free legal aid for cases involving sexual and gender-based violence. In October, the Ministry of Social Welfare, Gender and Children's Affairs launched the National Action Plan on Gender-Based Violence and the National Referral Protocol on Gender-Based Violence, which have contributed to strengthening the Government's response to sexual and gender-based violence.

VIII. Regional cooperation

43. In the reporting period, Sierra Leone continued to cooperate closely with neighbouring countries, both independently, and within the context of ECOWAS and the Mano River Union, on a range of regional issues. On 11 and 12 December, President Koroma visited Guinea and met with President Alpha Condé. In a communiqué following their meeting, both leaders reiterated their commitment to the liberation of northern Mali and expressed support for the transitional institutions established in Mali. UNIPSIL also continued to provide support to the initiatives of the Mano River Union secretariat to promote understanding among border communities, especially through meetings of the joint border security and confidence-building units with the participation of representatives from Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. In addition, UNIPSIL supported the Mano River Union in organizing a meeting of electoral commissions from Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone to share experience and exchange information on the prevention of electoral violence, which was held in Freetown on 11 September.

IX. Inter-agency technical assessment mission to Sierra Leone

44. Pursuant to Security Council resolution 2065 (2012), a United Nations inter-agency technical assessment mission was deployed to Sierra Leone from 14 to 25 January 2013. Led by the Department of Political Affairs of the Secretariat, it was comprised of representatives from the Department of Field Support, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, OHCHR, the Peacebuilding Support Office, UNDP and UNODC. The technical assessment mission reviewed progress in the implementation of the UNIPSIL mandate and provided proposals for the transition, drawdown and exit strategy of the mission. The technical assessment mission met with a wide range of interlocutors, including the President, his newly appointed Cabinet, representatives of national institutions, political parties, civil society organizations, including youth and women's groups, the international community and the United Nations family in Sierra Leone. It also visited Koidu (Eastern Province) to meet with local authorities and representatives.

45. The technical assessment mission found that Sierra Leone had made remarkable progress. The United Nations has accompanied peace efforts in Sierra Leone through a series of Security Council-mandated operations since 1998. In this regard, UNIPSIL is a well-identified "brand" in the country and is highly regarded and widely trusted for its impartiality by State institutions, political and civil society actors and the population at large.

46. The technical assessment mission ascertained that the recently concluded elections were conducted in a peaceful and transparent manner. The results were broadly accepted, despite the objections raised by the main opposition party. However, the elections highlighted once again the regional and ethnic divide and the pervasive lack of trust between the two main political parties (APC and SLPP) and their supporters. Additional challenges remain, including the need to consolidate and strengthen the country's democratic institutions; promote national reconciliation and national cohesion and a culture of political tolerance among the country's political actors; address unemployment, in particular among the young people; enhance the management of the exploitation of the nation's natural resources and extractive industries, including minerals; and combat corruption. There is also a continuing need to address the cross-border challenges posed by transnational organized crime and illicit drug trafficking.

47. The United Nations operation in Sierra Leone is structurally integrated, with UNIPSIL and the United Nations country team working together under the overall leadership of the Executive Representative of the Secretary-General/Resident Representative/Resident Coordinator to implement the United Nations Joint Vision for Sierra Leone (2009-2012) and the transitional United Nations Joint Vision (2013-2014). These joint peace consolidation plans contain programmatic clusters for United Nations support to the Government's Agenda for Prosperity (2013-2017).

48. Sierra Leone has been on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission since June 2006. The Commission has continued to highlight the country's post-conflict needs, advocate for additional assistance and ensure sustained international attention to the peacebuilding process. It is currently focused on providing support in three areas, namely, youth unemployment, drug trafficking, and good governance and the rule of law. The Commission has endorsed the United Nations Joint Vision and is contributing to ensuring coordination and alignment of the work of international partners on the ground.

A. Status of mandate implementation

49. Based on the key messages received from national stakeholders, the United Nations and other international partners, the technical assessment mission ascertained that the status of implementation of the mandated tasks of UNIPSIL is well advanced, in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 1829 (2008), 1886 (2009), 1941 (2010), 2005 (2011) and 2065 (2012), as well as Security Council Presidential Statements 2012/25, 2012/11 and 2011/4.

50. Regarding its mandate, UNIPSIL has provided assistance and support to the Government of Sierra Leone and its institutions in (a) conflict prevention and mitigation efforts and the promotion of dialogue; (b) consolidation of good governance reforms, focusing on anti-corruption instruments; (c) preparation and conduct of the 2012 elections; (d) meeting the country's peacebuilding and development priorities by strengthening the capacity-building of national political, security, human rights and rule of law institutions, promoting good governance and accountability, promoting gender and social equality, strengthening human rights protection, supporting efforts to improve youth empowerment and strengthening efforts to tackle transnational organized crime; (e) promotion of human rights,

democratic institutions and the rule of law; (f) mitigation of potential cross-border threats; (g) development of initiatives for the protection and well-being of young people, women and children; (h) promotion of a culture of peace and dialogue including by building an independent and capable public radio capacity; (i) engagement with bilateral and international partners as well as with national authorities in the formulation of the Agenda for Prosperity and in coordinating an integrated international response thereto; (j) supporting the work of the Peacebuilding Commission.

51. Most of the residual tasks under the UNIPSIL mandate can be progressively transitioned to the United Nations country team, the Government, national institutions, civil society organizations and bilateral and international partners over the next few months. Discussions for the transition of these tasks have already started between UNIPSIL and the country team. Subject to funding, the country team is prepared to take on the residual tasks of UNIPSIL, including enhancing national capacity for conflict prevention, management and recovery, as well as democratic governance; supporting national institutions, including media and non-State actors; combating corruption; addressing youth unemployment; managing the exploitation of natural resources and extractive industries; empowering women and promoting gender equality; and providing technical assistance to promote the implementation of the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

B. Residual tasks

1. Conflict prevention, mediation and support to democratic institutions

52. Notwithstanding the progress made by UNIPSIL, the Government continues to require support in the areas of conflict prevention, mediation and democratic institutions. The most important and immediate task involves stabilizing the post-election political environment. The mission's crisis prevention and mediation efforts, aimed at mitigating potential disputes, will be important during this period.

53. The Government of Sierra Leone has made it a priority to conduct and finalize a constitutional review process by 2014, as recommended by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Although State governance is the primary responsibility of the Government, there is still a need to provide continued support to the Government and relevant institutions in terms of facilitation and consensus-building in the upcoming constitutional review process, mainly focusing on political advocacy and support to broad consultations.

54. These residual tasks can be best fulfilled through the leadership of the Executive Representative of the Secretary-General, including in his or her capacity as Resident Coordinator. This would include continuing to play a key role in the coordination of political interventions and advocacy by the international community to ensure coherent international support to the Agenda for Prosperity. It will also be critical for the Executive Representative of the Secretary-General/Resident Coordinator to continue engaging with bilateral and international partners as well as with the national authorities in the formulation of the Agenda for Prosperity and in coordinating an integrated international response.

55. Strengthening of national institutions should continue, according to the various institutions that met with the technical assessment mission, including the Political Parties Registration Commission, the National Electoral Commission, the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone, the National Commission for Democracy, the Sierra Leone Broadcasting Corporation and the Independent Media Commission, in order to ensure their sustainability.

2. Security sector reform and cross-border threats

56. While considerable success has been achieved in the process of reform and restructuring of the overall security sector in Sierra Leone, the findings of the technical assessment mission demonstrate that challenges remain in the critical areas of governance, command and control, accountability and oversight, and coordination that warrant continued engagement at the strategic and policy levels. Thus, there is a need for UNIPSIL to continue supporting institutional actors in adopting a democratic and transparent security approach that focuses on being responsive to the population's needs. The United Nations should also remain engaged in broader security sector initiatives, such as the current plans to reconfigure the International Military Advisory Training Team, which is led by the United Kingdom, into the International Security Advisory Team. Support in addressing cross-border issues, while reinforcing such existing coor lination mechanisms as the West Africa Coast Initiative/Transnational Organized Crime Unit, will also be critical since the overall institutional capacity of the country remains limited.

57. In accordance with its mandate, UNIPSIL has played an important role in supporting the Government in its efforts to counter transnational organized crime and drug trafficking. Significant achievements have been made, leading to the growing capacity of national institutions in the areas of internal security and criminal justice. Although initial steps towards consolidation are being undertaken, some gaps remain; if not properly addressed, these gaps can easily jeopardize the considerable progress made so far. Support to and strengthening of strategic planning and coordination in addressing transnational organized crime will thus be critical, especially with respect to ensuring synergies among law enforcement institutions.

3. Human rights and gender

58. UNIPSIL has provided technical expertise, advice and advocacy to strengthen the capacity of the Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone; supported the enactment of important pieces of human rights legislation and the establishment of mechanisms to strengthen the national human rights protection framework; supported the Government of Sierra Leone to meet its reporting obligations; and coordinated contributions from other partners to streamline and enhance support to the Government. As such, the Human Rights Commission is now fully compliant with the Paris Principles and has been given international accreditation with "A" status by the International Coordinating Committee of National Human Rights Institutions. Nevertheless, Government officials and civil society organizations have affirmed that the continued support of UNIPSIL in strengthening national human rights and rule of law institutions would be important. National interlocutors also stressed the importance of ensuring that human rights aspects are sufficiently

addressed in pending and potentially sensitive political processes, such as the envisaged constitutional review process.

4. Overall summary of residual tasks

59. While recognizing that the majority of the residual activities of UNIPSIL could be transferred to the United Nations country team or bilateral partners, the core of its mandate, for good offices, political dialogue and mediation, as well as facilitation of the constitutional review process, can most effectively be fulfilled by the continued presence of United Nations political leadership on the ground. In this regard, the technical assessment mission identified the main benchmarks for the completion of the UNIPSIL mandate and effective transition: (a) reaching an agreement on a draft constitution by initiating and facilitating political dialogue; (b) the establishment of effective oversight and accountability mechanisms and streamlining the coordination, command and control capability of the Sierra Leone Police; (c) completion of the fourth and final phase of the implementation of the West Africa Coast Initiative/Transnational Organized Crime Unit in Sierra Leone; and (d) a strengthened Human Rights Commission of Sierra Leone.

60. In addition, the transitional United Nations Joint Vision (2013-2014) contains seven programmatic clusters that will constitute the contribution of the United Nations to the Government's Agenda for Prosperity. The contribution of UNIPSIL during the transition period to the programme clusters, aid effectiveness activities and operations of the transitional United Nations Joint Vision (2013-2014) will include support to good governance; gender equity and human rights; and integration of the United Nations family and coherence of the international community.

C. Transitional arrangements, timelines and liquidation

61. To build on its achievements and ensure a smooth transition, UNIPSIL will engage in a structured transition of residual tasks to the United Nations country team, bilateral and international partners and the Government of Sierra Leone. In this regard, with effect from 1 April 2013, it is expected that there will be a reduction in the tasks to be carried out by UNIPSIL until the end of its mandate. In anticipation of a refocused and streamlined mandate, UNIPSIL, in collaboration with the United Nations country team, should develop drawdown proposals by the end of March 2013. The drawdown proposals will include preparations for staffing drawdown, the transfer of archives to United Nations Headquarters and the liquidation of assets. UNIPSIL and the United Nations country team will also prepare a timeline and benchmarks by the end of March 2013 for the transition of all remaining tasks, including estimated resource plans and requirements covering both programmatic and operational aspects and resource requirements for strengthening the Resident Coordinator function.

62. To enable the United Nations country team to effectively absorb the residual tasks of UNIPSIL, efforts to mobilize the required resources as soon as possible are critical. In order to maintain the level of assistance and raise awareness of the challenges of the transition, the Peacebuilding Commission must be encouraged to play a central and leading role in donor mobilization efforts. Continued investment by the Peacebuilding Fund is critical in supporting national institutions and

non-State actors, strengthening the media, identifying gaps in national capacities and contributing to a United Nations response in respect of strengthening the capacity of the United Nations country team in the security sector, conflict prevention, organized crime, drug trafficking and anti-corruption, as well as strengthening United Nations capacity in the area of human rights and gender equality.

63. The management of perceptions concerning the departure of UNIPSIL from Sierra Leone will be critical for a successful transition. In this regard, UNIPSIL and the United Nations country team will develop a United Nations-wide communication strategy to emphasize that the United Nations system will remain in Sierra Leone even if the mission exits.

D. Support during the transition period and beyond

64. The United Nations family will need to continue to implement the transitional United Nations Joint Vision throughout 2013 and 2014. In the meantime, development of a full-fledged United Nations Development Assistance Framework must commence as soon as possible in order to be ready for implementation in 2015. Since the drawdown of UNIPSIL should not be used as a justification to reduce aid flows to the country, it is critical that donors increase their support to Sierra Leone. UNDP, UNODC and OHCHR will need to lead efforts to mobilize the required resources as soon as possible to enable the United Nations country team to absorb the mission's residual tasks.

65. Providing adequate medical facilities to United Nations staff members is critical, especially where medical capabilities are lacking. UNIPSIL and the United Nations country team operate a joint medical facility that caters to more then 3,000 people, including the diplomatic missions in Freetown. An agreement across the whole United Nations country team regarding cost-sharing of the joint medical facility and its 10 staff is needed; this agreement will define how the facilities can be sustainably funded before the third quarter of 2013.

66. Established in 2009, the United Nations joint field offices play a critical role in assisting local authorities to resolve disputes that could undermine the peace and stability in the regions, especially the hotspots where potential conflict could arise. These field offices cater to all United Nations country team members and each regional field office is managed by one partner, while common costs are shared among them. The transition of the field offices must be taken into full consideration as UNIPSIL and the United Nations country team undertake the transition, given that the sustainability of field offices for agencies depends on the availability of funding.

67. At the end of the mission's mandate, a smooth transition of the United Nations leadership function from the departing Executive Representative of the Secretary-General to the incoming Resident Coordinator must be ensured, with no or minimal interruption. The Resident Coordinator's office must be appropriately staffed to address political analysis, strategic planning, security sector reform and public information. A Peace and Development Adviser should be urgently deployed during the UNIPSIL transition phase. Concerning human rights, OHCHR and other relevant agencies will reflect on the appropriate modality for the continued United Nations engagement on human rights issues in Sierra Leone at the end of the transition,

including the possibility of a country office or the deployment of a Human Rights Adviser to the United Nations country team. The work of the Resident Coordinator would be complemented with the political support of the United Nations Office for West Africa, notably in the area of good offices.

X. Observations and recommendations

68. Sierra Leone has made significant progress since 2002, with the support of the United Nations. Over the 15 years of its operations in Sierra Leone, the United Nations supported the Government, civil society organizations and national institutions and organizations in the implementation of peace agreements, the holding of three free, fair and credible elections, national recovery, transition to a more comprehensive peacebuilding agenda, promoting good governance and human rights, and building the capacity of national institutions. All these achievements were possible owing to the close collaboration among the successive Governments of Sierra Leone, the people of Sierra Leone and the United Nations, as well as the continued engagement of the country's international partners.

69. The recent elections demonstrated the continued deepening of democratic transformation in the country, achieved through the strong commitment of the people of Sierra Leone and its successive Governments and institutions, with the support of bilateral and international partners. I commend Sierra Leone's institutions, in particular the National Electoral Commission, the Sierra Leone Police and the Political Parties Registration Commission, for their lead roles in the electoral process.

70. Sierra Leone's economy has continued to show progress; however, ensuring adequate standards of living for the vast majority of the citizenry and overcoming poverty and providing employment for young people continues to be a challenge. While revenues from the country's extractive industries are expected to improve in the coming years, implementation of the Government's Agenda for Prosperity will continue to require the support of Sierra Leone's international partners. Continuing to build the confidence of the citizenry, fully achieving the country's development goals, and continuing efforts to combat corruption remain vital. I applaud the Anti-Corruption Commission for its multi-pronged approach to combating corrupt practices and encourage it to continue these efforts and maintain the momentum.

71. While the successful conduct of the elections was commendable, the experience nonetheless highlighted the regional and ethnic divide in the country and the need to accelerate efforts to promote national cohesion. I urge the political leaders of Sierra Leone to come together in the national interest and build on their shared values in promoting national unity. In that respect, I welcome President Koroma's initiative regarding a review of the 1991 Constitution that will, inter alia, examine ways of fostering a greater sense of national cohesion. I also welcome the suggestions from the Government and the national authorities regarding a review of aspects of the country's electoral processes with a view to ensuring a more inclusive system of governance.

72. The constitutional review process will provide an opportunity for strengthening governance mechanisms in Sierra Leone, while enhancing the independence of the country's democratic institutions. In that connection, the early passage of the Political Parties Registration Commission reform legislation will

enable it to provide greater oversight of political parties. I encourage the establishment of an independent police complaints committee and a revised Media Code of Practice, which would enhance the country's democratic processes.

73. As part of the planned constitutional review process, I welcome the commitment of President Koroma to ensure that the Gender Equality Bill is passed and that necessary amendments are considered to enhance the rights of women and to increase their participation in the political process. Civil society remains an essential component of democracy; efforts aimed at strengthening civil society must therefore be continued.

74. Despite the real signs of progress in the country, there are serious residual challenges, including strengthening the capacity of security sector agencies, combating transnational organized crime and drug trafficking and the proposed constitutional review process. Support in addressing these challenges will require a reconfiguration of the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office for Sierra Leone.

75. It will be important to ensure that there are adequate resources, including logistical capabilities, to enable the United Nations country team to carry out additional activities and programmes during the transition of UNIPSIL and after its liquidation. The continuation of field presences will also require funding. In addition, once UNIPSIL departs, the Office of the Resident Coordinator must be strengthened in terms of human and financial resources for the implementation of follow-on activities. As such, I have asked United Nations system entities, particularly UNDP, UNODC and OHCHR, to lead efforts to mobilize the required resources as soon as possible to enable the United Nations country team to absorb the residual tasks of UNIPSIL. I also encourage the Peacebuilding Commission to help to sustain international support for Sierra Leone and to engage in resource mobilization efforts, including through the Peacebuilding Fund, to address part of the shortfall on a cost-sharing basis. I also call upon all international partners to assist in building the capacity of Sierra Leone's democratic institutions and to support the implementation of the country's Agenda for Prosperity.

76. Taking into account the conclusions of the review conducted by my technical assessment mission, I recommend that the mandate of UNIPSIL be extended for a period of 12 to 18 months. This period is critical for the mission to consolidate the gains it has accomplished so far by refocusing its mandate on the three critical remaining areas: (a) good offices and the facilitation of political dialogue towards a constitutional review process and towards strengthening conflict prevention and resolution processes; (b) security sector support; and (c) strengthening of human rights institutions. This period is also critical to transition the mission's residual tasks seamlessly to the United Nations country team and to ensure that the latter has adequate resources.

77. It is my intention to keep developments in Sierra Leone under close review and to make the necessary adjustments to the transition of UNIPSIL and follow-on United Nations country team presence as the milestones identified in paragraphs 52 to 63 above are reached.

78. In conclusion, I wish to congratulate President Koroma and his new Government on the progress made in consolidating peace in the country. I also wish to thank the Government and people of Sierra Leone for their continued cooperation

with the United Nations. I am grateful to Sierra Leone's international development partners for their generous support to the country's peacebuilding process. I thank my Executive Representative, Mr. Jens Toyberg-Frandzen, and the staff of UNIPSIL, the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, as well as other international partners, for their continued collaboration with UNIPSIL in the discharge of its mandate.

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Special Report of the Secretary-General on the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to the statement by the President of the Security Council adopted on 19 October 2012 (S/PRST/2012/22) and Council resolution 2076 (2012) of 20 November 2012, in which the Council requested me to submit a special report on possible options and their implications for reinforcing the ability of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) to implement its mandate. The report reviews the overall situation and the regional implications of the recent crisis in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and presents recommendations to address the recurring cycles of violence there in a comprehensive and collective regional manner. It proposes a package of actions that are required at the national and the regional levels and makes recommendations on the support to be provided by the international community, including through reinforced political efforts by the United Nations and a strengthened MONUSCO.

II. Evolution of the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

2. Significant progress has been achieved in the Democratic Republic of the Congo in the past 10 years. Through a political process, the national territory was reunited, foreign armed forces formally withdrew in accordance with the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement of 1999 and credible national elections in 2006 ended a successful transitional period. This led to the installation of a legitimate Government as well as the creation of space and time in which to consolidate peace and rebuild the country. A second post-transitional national election was held in 2011.

3. The overall economic situation has continued to improve significantly over the past 10 years, with an average economic growth rate of 6.5 per cent per year, a major decrease in inflation, increasing government domestic revenues, effective fiscal deficit control and the cancellation of debt under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative.

4. The western and central parts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo have generally stabilized, with the main challenges faced there relating to post-conflict reconstruction and long-term peacebuilding. In the east, in particular Orientale

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Province and the Kivus, efforts to address the threat of armed groups and to extend State authority have resulted in the relative stabilization of most of the Ituri district and the significant degradation of the capacities of foreign armed groups, including the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). In 2009, the Government launched the stabilization and reconstruction plan for war-affected areas aimed at, inter alia, improving security, re-establishing the authority of the State and supporting the return and reintegration of refugees and internally displaced persons and socioeconomic recovery.

5. However, and as exemplified by the current crisis in North Kivu, which started in April 2012, eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo also continues to be plagued by recurrent waves of conflict, chronic humanitarian crises and serious human rights violations, including sexual and gender-based violence. Contributing to the cycles of violence have been the continued presence of Congolese and foreign armed groups taking advantage of power and security vacuums in the eastern part of the country; the illegal exploitation of resources; interference by neighbouring countries; pervasive impunity; intercommunal feuds; and the weak capacity of the national army and police to effectively protect civilians and the national territory and ensure law and order. The weakness of the judiciary and penitentiary systems has also contributed to the state of general instability.

6. The recurrence of such cycles of violence continues to be an obstacle to peace in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and threatens the overall stability and development of the Great Lakes region. In the past, national, regional and international efforts have for the most part succeeded in addressing the immediate manifestations of crises, but not the core reasons for their eruption. In order to break such cycles and ensure that sustainable peace takes hold in the country and the wider region, a new, comprehensive approach that addresses the underlying causes of conflict is required.

III. Framework for Peace, Security and Cooperation for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region

7. This new, comprehensive approach will involve actions at the national level to address the outstanding tasks of State-building, consolidate democratic institutions for the benefit of the Congolese people and create conditions for sustainable development. It will involve actions at the regional level to address the legitimate concerns and interests of all countries of the Great Lakes region and actions at the international level in support of these initiatives. To this end, and in conjunction with the implementation of the commendable initiatives by the regional and subregional organizations, I have engaged the leaders of the region on an overall Framework for Peace, Security and Cooperation for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region, which outlines key action at the national, regional and international levels required to end the recurring cycles of violence in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo.

8. The Framework, which was signed in Addis Ababa on 24 February, establishes a national oversight mechanism, led by the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Joseph Kabila, to accompany the implementation of actions at the national level. Established within the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, it will be supported by the United Nations, the African Union, the World

Bank, the African Development Bank and other bilateral or multilateral partners of the Democratic Republic of the Congo that are agreed upon. The Framework also establishes a regional oversight mechanism, known as the "11+4" mechanism, involving the leaders of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola, Burundi, the Central African Republic, the Congo, Rwanda, South Africa, South Sudan, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia, with the United Nations, the African Union, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) acting as guarantors. The mechanism, which will monitor progress in the implementation of the regional commitments, is expected to meet twice a year at the level of Heads of State on the margins of the General Assembly and at the annual African Union summit. It will also be convened at the ministerial and other levels, as required. I will provide my good offices to accompany the implementation of the Framework in my role as guarantor. It will be supported by and closely linked to ongoing regional efforts by the African Union, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and SADC, as well as those of other international partners, including the European Union, Belgium, France, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America. The detailed plan for the implementation of the Framework will be developed jointly, including the establishment of benchmarks and appropriate follow-up measures.

A. Actions at the national level

9. One underlying reason for the recurring cycles of violence in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo involving Congolese and foreign armed groups is the Government's limited ability to exert full authority over its territory and to provide basic services and security to the population. The Democratic Republic of the Congo continues to face peace consolidation challenges emanating from a serious shortfall in terms of the capacity and lack of accountability of State institutions, in particular the army, the police, the judiciary and the prison service. Limited socioeconomic recovery, corruption and impunity are also major impediments to the extension of State authority. Impunity for human rights violations, including against women and children, is itself a symptom of weak State authority and fuels further conflict. In addition, there are concerns about limited political space and the perceived emerging trend towards the concentration of authority in the executive branch.

10. The lack of progress towards building well-trained and well-equipped armed forces constitutes a major threat to the stability of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. A professional and accountable army is one of the critical pillars for strengthening State authority and achieving stability. In addition to security sector reform, other national actions are required to enable the Government to consolidate its authority. These include governance and structural reforms; economic development; decentralization; and the furtherance of the rule of law, human rights and democratization.

Security sector

11. As I noted in annex II to my report on MONUSCO of 14 November 2012 (S/2012/838), the recent crisis in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo has again underlined the need to reform the security sector, notably the Forces armées

de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC), and to review approaches to dealing with armed groups, including through disarmament, demobilization and reintegration. The Congolese authorities and their partners should also work towards the development of an overall vision for the security sector and the strengthening of the capacity of oversight bodies.

Army reform

12. FARDC suffers from systemic weaknesses, which are compounded by an inadequate budget, as well as insufficient administrative and logistical systems, including weapons and ammunitions management. The fast-tracked integration of unvetted, armed-group elements into FARDC as part of peace settlements signed by the Government has resulted in the destabilization of its command and control structures and undermined its level of conduct and discipline. The continued grave human rights violations committed by some members of FARDC are also emblematic of its lack of professionalism. As a consequence, the operational performance of FARDC has not been that expected of a professional national army.

13. Comprehensive reforms aimed at building a professional army subject to civilian control and capable of carrying out the fundamental task of protecting the integrity of the national territory and its population are critical. Such a process will also require the allocation of the necessary resources and the adoption of key legislation to establish a national security force. A strong oversight and accountability mechanism should also be instituted, with support from the international community.

14. Without the political will and full commitment and ownership of the Government, no meaningful work can be achieved in the area of army reform. There has been some progress in that regard. In statements made on 15 and 31 December 2012, President Kabila indicated that army reform would constitute a major priority for his Government in 2013. In January, the National Assembly adopted an amendment to the Finance Law that increased fund allocations for national security institutions, including FARDC.

15. Under the auspices of the national authorities, strong coordinated international support, including increased resources and technical assistance, will be required to realize comprehensive army reform. Technical assistance will also be required to support the national authorities in identifying the tasks, size and resource requirements of the Congolese national defence force. Modalities for the vetting of FARDC personnel on the basis of merit and human rights records for the Congolese defence force should be included in the plan of action.

16. The structural reform of the national defence force of the Democratic Republic of the Congo will be a long-term undertaking. As a first step, the authorities should be encouraged to establish a well-trained and adequately equipped rapid reaction force of approximately five brigades. The rapid reaction force should be capable of intervening against emerging threats, including ensuring the protection of civilians in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, in close coordination with MONUSCO. The rapid reaction force should form the nucleus of a professional, well-sustained and effective national defence force. Well-coordinated and generous international assistance will be required to establish such a force.

17. MONUSCO stands ready to coordinate international support for enhanced actions on security sector reform, including the possible establishment of a rapid

reaction force. The Mission could also contribute to the training efforts of such a force.

18. As far as wider security sector reform efforts are concerned, it will be important to assist the Congolese authorities in designing a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration plan that offers alternatives for Congolese combatants and dependants, including members of FARDC. In particular, there is a need for a comprehensive approach to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and to disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, reintegration and resettlement, bringing the two formerly distinct processes together as one initiative that addresses Congolese combatants and foreign elements in both Congolese and foreign armed groups. Moreover, traditional disarmament, demobilization and reintegration could be reinforced by preventive, community-based measures such as community violence reduction programmes, including youth employment schemes. The United Nations, drawing on expertise from MONUSCO and the relevant United Nations funds, programmes and agencies, could provide the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo with integrated technical support in the initial stages of planning for the comprehensive approach outlined above.

Extension of State authority

19. The consolidation of State authority through the deployment of police and the establishment of territorial administration, as well as judicial and prison institutions, is essential in laying the foundations for sustainable peace and preventing the recurrence of violence. Despite the progress achieved over the past 10 years, decades of mismanagement and lack of governance have eroded State authority. Provincial authorities generally lack effective capacity, and institutions are under-resourced and underfunded. Judicial and administrative services are weak and the police presence inadequate. This is compounded by extremely poor conditions of service for public officials. Ineffective institutions impair the capacity of the central authorities to govern, levy taxes and uphold the rule of law. Institutions often coexist with local criminal networks and are either unable to impose State authority or, in some cases, become co-opted by private interests.

20. Significant differences in levels of training and expertise remain within the Congolese national police. Some police elements who have been recently integrated from armed groups have not undergone a formal vetting process, and members of the force have on occasion been found guilty of human rights violations, including sexual violence. The police are also constrained by a lack of vehicles, communications systems and related equipment and by a poorly functioning salary disbursement system. Progress in the implementation of the 15-year strategic plan and the three-year action plan aimed at building the capacity of the police, which were adopted in October 2009, would contribute to the restoration of State authority.

21. The long-term capacity-building of the police should continue to be a priority for the national authorities and the international community, and MONUSCO will continue its capacity-building initiatives and specialized training programmes in that regard. In order to avoid recruiting ex-combatants with a history of human rights violations, MONUSCO will also continue to participate in the vetting of newly recruited cadets.

22. Operating on less than 1 per cent of the national budget, the justice sector lacks functioning administrative systems, including in the areas of finance,

personnel, case-tracking, the budget, procurement and asset management. Interference in justice processes by government officials at various levels is common, as is corruption, leading to the prevalence of a state of impunity throughout the country. There are fewer than 1,400 judges and prosecutors, compared with an assessed need of at least 5,000, and only a limited number of jurists, including defence counsel. Military justice institutions continue to face challenges similar to those on the civilian side, including a severe shortage of military judges and prosecutors. The military justice system is also subject to political and command interference, and security arrangements for magistrates in conflict-affected areas are woefully inadequate.

23. The prison system is characterized by inhuman conditions of detention, including lack of medical facilities and severe overcrowding. Very few prisons have an allocated budget for operational costs, and detainees regularly face malnutrition and lack of health services. Security installations are rudimentary, contributing to high rates of escape. Some 95 per cent of personnel working in correctional facilities are self-appointed and there is no training institution for prison personnel. No formal or practical coordination exists among the Ministries of Justice and Human Rights, Defence and the Interior, which are together responsible for the corrections sector. Of approximately 18,000 inmates in correctional facilities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, at least 70 per cent are held in pretrial detention. Only one military prison is currently operational. MONUSCO and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) will continue to work closely with the Government to finalize a joint initiative aimed at addressing the penitentiary situation and establish a minimum level of sustainable State authority and control in the conflict-affected areas in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo through the deployment of trained and equipped police and judicial and corrections officials. The United Nations will also continue to ensure compliance with prison system standards and practices and assist the national authorities with the development of mechanisms designed to combat illegal and prolonged detention and improve prison conditions.

Governance and structural reforms

24. International independent indicators have persistently ranked the Democratic Republic of the Congo as one of the most corrupt countries in the world. The detrimental consequences are far-reaching. Widespread corruption, combined with weak, non-transparent, and poorly coordinated revenue collection systems, as well as poor salary and other State disbursement systems, have impeded the capacity of the Government to carry out its obligations. Limited basic social services, such as the provision of health care, water and education, combined with the lack of job opportunities, have delayed the return to stability and peace in parts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. While the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other programmes have made significant progress in those areas in recent years, much remains to be done.

25. The combination of a porous and opaque public finance system with deficient judicial contract enforcement mechanisms and the lack of functioning financial oversight bodies continues to discourage legitimate foreign investors and local entrepreneurs. As a result, national and provincial budgets remain underfunded when compared with the potential wealth and size of the country. This has an important impact on infrastructure development and basic service delivery. UNDP will continue to strengthen the capacities of provinces to formulate their growth and

poverty reduction strategies and support the mobilization of partners around provincial priority action plans. In addition, it will continue to support the reform of public finances through the restructuring of tax-collection services, as well as the reorganization of the local fiscal system and the chain of local expenditures.

26. With the support of international partners, the Government should consider launching a large-scale capacity-building and training initiative for senior and other State employees, who could later impart best practices in management and promote good governance among the lower-level cadres in a sustainable manner. In support of this, and as a first step, the Government could consider, in close coordination with other national stakeholders, strategies that include the creation of joint national/international advisory teams or the embedding of international experts in key ministries.

Economic and human development

27. The Government's efforts in the area of economic development since the transitional period in 2003 have led to a stable macroeconomic framework; real gross domestic product (GDP) growth rates of over 6 per cent during the past decade, reversing decades of declining GDP; and inflation rates brought down to single-digit levels. Revenue collection has produced increases in State revenues both in absolute terms and in terms of percentage of GDP (from 16 per cent in 2009 to more than 20 per cent projected in 2013). The country's 90 per cent foreign debt relief of $10 billion in 2011 was also a positive development. The very low base, however, from which these programmes started means that overall revenues available to national and provincial governments, even including foreign budgetary support, remain highly inadequate to address a wide variety of urgent requirements. A continuing lack of transparency in the management of the extractive sector, and more generally in State-run enterprises, also remains a significant impediment to further gains in investment and economic development and related potential budget revenue growth.

28. Despite improved macroeconomic performance, 71 per cent of the population still live in extreme poverty, and access to basic services remains limited. The Democratic Republic of the Congo was ranked the lowest of 187 countries on the UNDP human development index in 2011, and the country is not expected to reach any of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015. On 10 December 2012, IMF ended its economic programme with the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as the country had not complied with its structural benchmark on governance and transparency in the mining sector, and withheld the payment of the remaining $240 million of a three-year $500 million loan agreement.

29. Furthermore, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has not been able to reap the benefits of the exploitation of its natural resources. The effective management of that sector still faces the challenge of massive illegal exploitation, facilitated by corruption and the presence of armed groups. International assistance can add value only if a number of challenges are addressed by the authorities, including: (a) inconsistent sectoral policies; (b) the need for reforms of the public administration to enable it to better track and manage natural resources; (c) the limited capacity of the national agencies responsible for environmental monitoring and fighting corruption, resulting in a lack of transparency in the management of mineral resources

and a culture of non-accountability; and (d) the limited capacity of the Government to negotiate and manage mining and natural resource exploitation contracts.

30. The Government's 2012-2016 programme, adopted in May 2012, envisages an increase in the annual GDP growth rate from 5 to 7 per cent and a reduction in inflation to 4 per cent. It also envisages a boost in electricity production and agricultural output and an increase in the output of the mining sector, and foresees important reforms in a number of areas, including the payments system and the banking and financing system, as well as the reorganization of public enterprises. The programme provides a sound road map for the economic reforms that are required. However, four factors are essential to its success. The first factor is to ensure the necessary political will to accord its implementation the necessary priority. The second is to ensure that the resources required for its implementation are available, including the necessary technical capacities and expertise. The third is to ensure accountability at the national and local levels. The factor is strong support from the international community, including from the relevant financial institutions. As with the recent decision of the Government and Parliament to allocate increased funding to the defence sector, other areas of national budget allocations should be increased. The United Nations will support the Government's programme through the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (2013-2017), which focuses on governance and institution-building; inclusive growth and job creation; basic social services and human capital development; natural resources and climate change; and stabilization and peace consolidation within the framework provided by the international security, stabilization and support strategy devised to support the Government's stabilization and reconstruction plan for war-affected areas.

Decentralization

31. Decentralization and the establishment of legitimate and effective provincial and local institutions are an important means of addressing many of the root causes of conflict at the local level and enabling the integration of minority groups. Decentralization also allows for the equitable and more effective distribution of basic services to local populations.

32. The Constitution provides a framework for decentralization. However, limited progress has been achieved, in part owing to such complex internal political challenges as weak political and social ownership of the process, delays in establishing the framework for implementation, lack of consensus in Parliament on the options for territorial division, insufficient financing and conflicting pressures from various constituencies.

33. The Government's commitment to moving forward with the adoption of the remaining legislation on decentralization will be critical. Progress was made in 2012, when 7 of 14 key laws were passed and local financial tools developed with the aim of creating a functioning system of decentralization, with a view to reforming the sharing of revenues between the provinces and the capital. UNDP will continue to support the operationalization of the provincial and local public finance management platforms, which has improved revenue and expenditure tracking as well as the capacity of provincial and local authorities to mobilize their own resources. The decentralization process must continue to be carefully managed to avoid exacerbating existing ethnic, land, traditional rule hierarchy and other

tensions, and the related prospect of increased localized violence in various parts of the country.

Democratization and human rights

34. A solid foundation for stability and economic reconstruction and development lies in a functional, democratic system. Such a system ensures the peaceful transition of power through credible and peaceful electoral processes; establishes guarantees and clear checks and balances between the branches of Government; and opens space for the active participation of civil society and independent media. National opposition actors and other observers have protested that the Government has taken systematic steps to consolidate its power, restrict political space and intimidate and target opponents, whether from political parties or civil society. United Nations agencies will continue their efforts to further the democratization process, including in support of the expansion of political space for all political parties and civil society.

35. As highlighted by a number of national and international observer groups, the presidential and legislative elections of November 2011 were marred by irregularities, with the results contested by a number of national actors. It is essential that the Government continue to honour its commitment to take active steps to advance the democratization process in this critical and fragile period for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in accordance with core constitutional principles. Active and meaningful steps to investigate and prosecute those responsible for the human rights violations committed in the context of the 2011 elections and respect for fundamental civil rights and liberties are critical.

36. The timely completion of the provincial elections, originally scheduled for March 2012, followed by local elections planned since 2007, will be a major factor in consolidating the democratic process by concluding the current electoral cycle. If this is to be achieved, the installation of a new, credible independent National Electoral Commission which is equipped with the necessary technical expertise and commands the confidence and respect of national political actors will be necessary and will encourage international donors to resume their assistance. An important step forward was made with the adoption by Parliament, on 14 January of the revised Organic Law on the Independent National Electoral Commission. The new text includes civil society representation and enhanced gender representation within the managerial structure of the institution. The timely promulgation and implementation of the revised Organic Law, notably to include the establishment of the new Commission, will lead to the resumption of the electoral process.

37. With regard to human rights, advances in the structural and legislative reforms that are essential to improve the human rights situation have remained slow, and Government efforts to establish the necessary institutions to protect and promote human rights throughout the country remain limited. The adoption by Parliament of the draft organic law establishing the National Human Rights Commission is a step forward, but the law has yet to be promulgated by the President. Limited progress has also been made with regard to the establishment of transitional justice mechanisms.

38. Human rights violations continue to be widespread, and impunity remains pervasive throughout the country. Grave violations against children, including the use of child soldiers, have been widespread in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. Advances in the structural and legislative reforms that are essential to

improving the human rights situation have remained slow, and Government efforts to establish the necessary institutions to protect and promote human rights throughout the country remain limited. Progress towards the establishment of transitional justice mechanisms has also been limited.

39. Long-term stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo cannot be achieved without addressing these and other human rights violations, in terms of both prevention and accountability and assistance to victims. The signature by the Government on 5 October 2012 of an action plan to end the recruitment and use of child soldiers and sexual violence against children by FARDC, in line with Security Council resolutions 1612 (2005) and 1882 (2009), is an important step towards mitigating violations.

Humanitarian activities

40. Thanks to donor support, extensive humanitarian operations have contributed to saving lives and reducing human suffering for millions of people throughout the Democratic Republic of the Congo during the past years. However, the country continues to face recurrent humanitarian challenges. The number of internally displaced persons had risen to more than 2.6 million by mid-December 2012, from 1.8 million at the beginning of 2012. In North Kivu alone there have been 500,000 new displacements since April 2012. In the context of recurrent conflict and violence in the country, the protection of civilians has remained a major humanitarian concern. Contamination with unexploded ordnance continues to pose a significant threat to the local population. The ongoing need for clearance and risk-education activities in areas affected by unexploded ordnance remains a high priority. There is also an opportunity for the Government to assume greater responsibility for delivering protection and assistance to internally displaced persons in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo through the enactment of legislation on displacement.

41. Some 6.3 million people are affected by food insecurity, while diseases, including malaria, cholera and measles, threaten millions of people. Malnutrition, which is especially endemic in less conflict-affected provinces such as the Kasaïs and Bas-Congo, is blamed for 35 per cent of deaths among children under 5 years of age, some 2.5 million of whom are affected by acute malnutrition. Access to improved water and sanitation remains limited for the vast majority of the Congolese people.

42. There is a need for the Government and international partners to strengthen linkages between humanitarian and development efforts to help build community resilience further so that people can better cope with increased vulnerability and shocks. Donor willingness to invest in resilience and development activities would also help to enhance the impact and cost effectiveness of assistance in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. To this end, the United Nations will provide assistance to foster community dialogue for peace consolidation, and support reintegration and recovery with a view to building social cohesion among the population. This will cover community development activities through the provision of basic social services, and the building of economic infrastructure. In this context, it is proposed that the United Nations also support the establishment of a Democratic Republic of the Congo-led "platform for dialogue" between the Government and humanitarian and development donors to help strengthen strategic coordination of the various financing mechanisms for humanitarian, stabilization and development assistance. Such a platform would help the Government and its

partners to move from a sequential to a more simultaneous and comprehensive response to humanitarian and development challenges in the country.

B. Actions at the regional level

43. Since the conclusion of the Lusaka Agreement in 1999, there have been numerous bilateral, regional and international initiatives aimed at restoring stability to the Great Lakes region. These initiatives have been successful in addressing various aspects of the problem, including reunifying the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and reducing the threat of such foreign armed groups as FDLR and LRA. The International Conference on the Great Lakes Region process, including the conclusion in 2006 of the milestone Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region, has in some respects contributed to addressing the political, security and economic dimensions of the conflict. The Conference remains a key partner to date.

44. The important progress achieved has not, however, succeeded in ending the recurring cycles of violence that have beset eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. In addition to the actions at the national level outlined in section A above, a number of collective actions at the regional level are required. Such actions should tackle the regional drivers of recurring violence and address, in a comprehensive manner, the legitimate concerns and interests of all of the neighbours of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Non-interference

45. An essential first step is the strong reaffirmation of the commitments made by the countries of the Great Lakes region not to interfere in the internal affairs of neighbouring countries. The Framework for Peace, Security and Cooperation for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region offers a full commitment not to interfere in the internal affairs of neighbouring countries; to neither tolerate nor provide assistance or support of any kind to armed groups; to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of neighbouring countries; to respect the legitimate concerns and interests of neighbouring countries, in particular regarding security matters; to neither harbour nor provide protection of any kind to persons accused of war crimes, crimes against humanity, acts of genocide or crimes of aggression, or persons falling under the United Nations sanctions regime; and to facilitate the administration of justice through judicial cooperation within the region. Countries of the region should also commit themselves to prosecuting, extraditing or handing over those individuals to the International Criminal Court, as applicable.

46. Given the multiplicity of occasions on which the countries of the Great Lakes region have committed themselves to these principles in the past, it is essential that the process be accompanied by concrete steps and confidence-building measures that are workable and acceptable to all States of the region with support from the international community. Any viable long-term solution must take into consideration the legitimate national interests of all countries in the Great Lakes region. A comprehensive strategy to neutralize the threats posed by Congolese and foreign armed groups operating in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo would be a central component of this process, including reinsertion and reintegration packages for returning former combatants and their dependants.

Addressing the threat posed by armed groups

47. Thriving in the security vacuum created by the absence of effective State authority in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, armed groups continue to constitute the main threat to the security of the population and the general stability of the region and an obstacle to regional cohesion. The continuing military deployments of the Mouvement du 23 Mars (M23), occupying the heights immediately overlooking the town of Goma and threatening it, underscore this threat. In addition to M23, the various Mayi-Mayi groups and other Congolese armed groups, the main foreign armed groups include FDLR, the Allied Democratic Forces and National Liberation Army of Uganda (ADF/NALU), LRA and the Forces nationales de libération (FNL).

48. As a first essential step in stabilizing eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, a comprehensive strategy to address armed groups should be developed using military and non-military means. All armed groups, whether Congolese or foreign, have also engaged in the illegal exploitation of the vast mineral and other natural resources of eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as other criminal activities. For those groups, the benefits derived from the illegal exploitation of those resources not only finance their acquisition of illicit weapons, but have also become an end in themselves.

49. States of the region should strengthen their cooperation to effectively end illicit cross-border trafficking in natural resources and weapons and put in place effective security and border control measures. Promoting viable regional arrangements that allow for stronger economic integration would contribute to that effort.

50. In addition, strengthening border surveillance and agreeing on an effective verification mechanism would significantly curtail the support that armed groups receive from individuals or entities from neighbouring countries. The provision of ongoing support to armed groups by neighbouring countries continues to be a source of serious instability and should have tangible consequences for perpetrators.

51. The putting in place of alternative options for those members of armed groups who are not suspected of crimes against humanity, war crimes or genocide would be another important aspect of the strategy to neutralize the threat of armed groups. Such options could include effective demobilization packages as well as opportunities for social and political reintegration into their countries of origin. This would require the support and active participation of the international community.

52. Finally, until the Government can assemble a capable Congolese defence force, such a strategy will require, in addition to the measures outlined above, a military enforcement capability designed to neutralize the threat posed by the most recalcitrant elements of the armed groups. Proposals in that regard are presented in paragraphs 60 to 64 below.

Deepening regional economic integration

53. To ensure the long-term stability of the Great Lakes region, the countries of the region need to enhance regional cooperation, in particular by deepening economic integration to meet the aspirations of their people.

54. States of the region should consider increasing joint initiatives aimed at promoting such regional integration and development projects as joint regional

infrastructure for energy, transport and communications and strengthening multisectoral cooperation and activities aimed at border communities. Partnerships, including private sector investment, are essential to finance heavy infrastructure projects, such as the rehabilitation of the Inga I and II dams and the construction of railways for different regional corridors as planned by the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Interventions aimed at reducing inefficiencies and costs in connection with trade at the borders are also essential, taking into account issues related to informal cross-border trade. Moreover, an improved regulatory framework through the establishment of a regional cross-border trade facilitation unit under NEPAD and the Lagos Plan of Action for the Economic Development of Africa to oversee implementation of a cross-border trade strategy should be considered. The commitment made by the signatories of the Framework for Peace, Security and Cooperation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region, to strengthen regional cooperation, including deepening economic integration with special consideration for the exploitation of natural resources, is an important step in that direction.

C. Actions at the international level

55. The Democratic Republic of the Congo and the States of the Great Lakes region bear the primary responsibility for the proposed actions outlined above. At the same time, the actions described in the present report will require a renewed commitment by the international community to enhance its investment in the restoration of lasting peace in the region.

56. The international community's strong and coordinated support for the restoration of peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region is essential to the success of the new, comprehensive approach set out in the present report. The Framework for Peace, Security and Cooperation for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region provides a common platform for the provision of such coordinated support.

57. To accompany the national and regional actions, I have decided to appoint a Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, who will work closely with the Governments of the region to reach agreements and establish mechanisms to guarantee non-interference in the internal affairs of the neighbouring States. The Special Envoy will help them to agree on ways to neutralize the threat of the various armed groups operating in the Great Lakes region on the basis of the approach described in paragraphs 47 to 52 above. He or she will foster new agreements among countries in the region and revitalize the implementation of existing accords that promote regional economic integration and the free movement of goods and people. He or she will also mobilize resources and support for those initiatives and assist with the strategic coordination of international support and various funding streams in the region for stabilization, development, humanitarian and peacekeeping activities. My Special Envoy will also have a key role to play in mobilizing public interest and international support for the Great Lakes region.

58. My Special Envoy will liaise closely with the regional and subregional organizations, including the African Union, SADC, the Economic Community of Central African States and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. Recognizing the complexities and chronic nature of the problems facing the Great

Lakes region, I propose that the mandate of my Special Envoy should be established for an initial renewable period of one year. The Special Envoy would be supported by a small office comprising relevant experts.

59. The reforms to be undertaken in the Democratic Republic of the Congo at the national level will require strong, coordinated and sophisticated international support, including expertise and resources. My Special Representative for the Democratic Republic of the Congo will continue to promote and facilitate inclusive and transparent political dialogue among all stakeholders concerned. This will contribute to the creation of an environment conducive to the implementation of the national commitments included in the Framework. Security sector reform and addressing the threat posed by armed groups will be critical areas of priority for the Mission.

IV. Intervention brigade

60. In support of the objectives of the Framework for Peace, Security and Cooperation for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region, and following consultation with the African Union, SADC and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, which had initially conceived the idea of the deployment of a peace-enforcement force to address the threat posed by armed groups, it is proposed that a dedicated intervention brigade be established within MONUSCO for an initial period of one year. Under the direct operational command of the MONUSCO Force Commander and operating alongside other MONUSCO brigades in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, the intervention brigade would have the peace-enforcement tasks of preventing the expansion of, neutralizing and disarming armed groups, to be carried out together with disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, reintegration and resettlement efforts. The activities of the intervention brigade would be aimed at creating an environment conducive to the restoration of State authority and the achievement of sustainable stability. The brigade would also contribute towards creating the space and time for a strengthened FARDC to undertake its primary responsibility.

61. The intervention brigade would carry out targeted offensive operations, either on its own or jointly with FARDC, in a robust, highly mobile and versatile manner. It would rely on the Mission's air and other support assets to carry out its tasks, including an additional two attack helicopters and four utility helicopters, as requested in my letter to the Security Council dated 27 December 2012 (S/2013/43), and budgetary support. Additional capabilities would be acquired for advanced information collation, analysis and dissemination to enhance situational awareness and enable timely decision-making. This would be provided by the upcoming deployment of unmanned aerial systems, of which the Council took note on 22 January (see S/2013/44).

62. It is proposed that the intervention brigade be composed of three infantry battalions, enabling units and force multipliers. This would entail the generation of two new infantry battalions and the reassignment of one infantry battalion already deployed in MONUSCO. An artillery battery, a special forces company, a signals unit and support components would form the remainder of the brigade. The brigade would be deployed within the Mission's current authorized strength.

63. The deployment of the intervention brigade would be preceded by predeployment training in the areas of human rights, the protection of civilians and gender. The operations of the brigade would be conducted in strict compliance with international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law. Past experience with military operations against armed groups in North and South Kivu has shown that civilians often flee their homes in a preventive manner ahead of such operations, while armed groups tend to regroup and return after the operations to commit violent reprisal acts against civilians. To mitigate this, MONUSCO will incorporate enhanced mechanisms for the protection of civilians. These will include a strengthened assessment of the impact of offensive operations, measures to mitigate harm to civilians before, during and after operations, and accountability for any violations. This will build upon the ongoing review of existing strategies and best practices for the protection of civilians.

64. As part of the overall coordination efforts with regional partners, regular updates will be provided to military representatives from troop-contributing countries and the region on the activities of the intervention brigade.

V. New approach to the role of the Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

65. The United Nations peacekeeping operation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has evolved since 1999, progressively assuming more responsibilities and tasks to meet the requirements of an evolving situation. Recognizing that the wider United Nations presence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo will continue to be engaged for a considerably longer period to help address the country's peace consolidation, recovery and reconstruction challenges, the Mission's activities should be focused on achieving key strategic objectives that help establish solid foundations for peace without the risk of a major relapse into instability and conflict.

66. In line with the commitments outlined in the Framework for Peace, Security and Cooperation for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region, an end-state that would enable MONUSCO to successfully complete its peacekeeping mandate would be the reduction of armed conflict, violence against civilians and sexual violence to a level that can be effectively managed by national security and justice institutions; stabilization through the establishment of functional State institutions in conflict-affected and mining areas; and a functioning democratic order that reduces the risk of instability, including adequate political space, observance of human rights and credible elections on a regular basis.

67. While closely monitoring developments in the western part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and in addition to supporting the implementation of the national commitments included in the Framework, it is proposed that MONUSCO prioritize and streamline its activities in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo in the forthcoming period with the aim of contributing to the realization of the following six key objectives: (a) the promotion and facilitation of inclusive and transparent political dialogue among all stakeholders with a view to furthering reconciliation and democratization; (b) the successful completion of military operations against foreign and Congolese armed groups and the reduction of the threat that they pose to a level that can be managed by national security authorities, in strict compliance with international humanitarian human rights and refugee law

and the human rights due diligence policy on United Nations support to non-United Nations security forces; (c) the disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, reintegration and resettlement of foreign armed groups, and the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of Congolese combatants, including the demobilization and reintegration of some elements within FARDC, and the start of a viable community-based reintegration process for former combatants; (d) the establishment of a minimum level of sustainable State authority and control in the conflict-affected areas in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, most critically through the deployment of trained and equipped police and judicial and corrections officials, on the basis of a national vision and strategies for the security and justice sectors; (e) support for the establishment of an effective national civilian structure to control key mining activities and manage in an equitable manner the extraction and trade of natural resources in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo; and (f) the creation of a well-sustained, equipped, trained and vetted national rapid reaction force, within the broader objective of security sector reform, adequately trained in international humanitarian, human rights and refugee law, and incorporating effective mechanisms to ensure the protection of civilians in all of its operations, which would eventually have the capability of assuming security responsibilities from MONUSCO.

68. The mandate of MONUSCO should be reviewed to reflect the six key priorities outlined above. A review of the Mission's activities could also be undertaken in the near future to further focus them and ensure complementarity of efforts with other key partners. In the meantime, my Special Representative's good offices role should also be strengthened to facilitate the implementation of the national commitments included in the Framework. In addition, and in accordance with paragraph 28 of resolution 2053 (2012), my previous report on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2013/96) outlined the strategy and efforts made to effectively transfer responsibility of some MONUSCO tasks to members of the United Nations country team.

VI. Observations

69. While progress has been achieved over the past 14 years in the promotion of stability in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the crisis brought about by the M23 rebellion has underscored the continued fragility of the situation in the eastern part of the country, highlighted the similarities with past crises instigated by previous rebellions and demonstrated that the underlying causes of continued instability in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo have yet to be adequately addressed.

70. I am convinced that the situation today offers an opportunity to collectively address the underlying causes of the conflict in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region and to break the pattern of recurring cycles of violence. I call on all stakeholders to honour their commitments as outlined in the Framework for Peace, Security and Cooperation for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region and to work closely and in good faith with my Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region. I also intend to remain closely engaged with the process.

71. I take note of the commitment made by President Kabila to implement key national reforms. Political will and strong leadership will be required to enable the Government to consolidate its authority, in particular in eastern Democratic

Republic of the Congo. My Special Representative for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and MONUSCO will play a central role in ensuring that the national commitments made by President Kabila in the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the region are implemented in good faith.

72. I recognize that the legitimate concerns and interests of all neighbouring States must be taken into account as part of any lasting political settlement in the Great Lakes region. In this regard, I wish to reiterate that the provision of external support to any of the armed groups operating in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo is an unacceptable violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo that severely undermines the overall stability of the region as whole.

73. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the African Union, SADC and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region for their initiatives to help resolve the crisis. Their ongoing efforts are a testimony to the important role that regional mechanisms are playing in mitigating conflict in the region.

74. The international community has made a significant investment in the stability of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region. It must continue to play a constructive role through enhanced coordination. The reforms that the Government needs to undertake are complex and will require political will and strong leadership as well as generous financial and technical assistance from international partners.

75. The implementation of the Framework will require sustained political, technical and financial support from international stakeholders, in particular those most closely involved in the oversight mechanisms. Together with the leaders of the region, my Special Envoy will review progress on a regular basis and suggest concrete steps to advance the implementation of the Framework. I call on the international community to play its part in ensuring that the Framework translates into tangible actions that address the root causes of instability in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region. I intend to report to the Council on a regular basis on progress made in the implementation of the Framework and will call on the international community to act swiftly and decisively in the face of any violation by States of the Great Lakes region of their regional commitments.

76. I welcome the general consensus among regional actors to support the establishment of an intervention brigade within MONUSCO. Recognizing that there is no military solution to the problems plaguing the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Great Lakes region, this additional capacity within MONUSCO should be viewed as an instrument, alongside non-military means, in support of the political process guided by the principles of the Framework. In this context, the intervention brigade should have a clear exit strategy that recognizes that FARDC has the primary responsibility for safeguarding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

77. The strengthened United Nations role and involvement will be largely predicated on continued support by major donors, who would work closely with all signatories to the Framework in the implementation of the national and regional commitments. My Special Envoy will remain in close contact with them in order to keep them abreast of progress made and remaining challenges in the implementation.

78. I would like to take this opportunity to thank my senior advisers, troop- and police-contributing countries, the United Nations country team and those who have contributed to the new approach being proposed, for their dedication to their work, often in challenging conditions.

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Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006)

Reporting period from 30 October 2012 to 28 February 2013

I. Introduction

1. The present report provides a comprehensive assessment of the implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) since my previous report of 14 November 2012 (S/2012/837).

2. Against the backdrop of the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic, the cessation of hostilities between Israel and Lebanon continued to hold and the situation south of the Litani River and along the Blue Line generally remained stable. Although there was no substantive progress towards implementation of their respective outstanding obligations under resolution 1701 (2006), the parties maintained their commitment to the resolution. During the reporting period, both parties sought to reassure the other, through the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), that they did not wish to see any resumption of hostilities and, in some instances, sought to develop further security and liaison arrangements with UNIFIL.

3. Nevertheless, unidentified armed groups twice attempted to launch rockets from Lebanon into northern Israel, coinciding with the timing of the conflict in the Gaza Strip and southern Israel from 14 to 21 November 2012. UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces responded to the outbreak of hostilities by enhancing their coordinated activities in the UNIFIL area of operations.

4. The President of Lebanon, Michel Sleiman, visited UNIFIL headquarters in Naqoura on 18 January 2013 to express appreciation for the work of UNIFIL and highlight the partnership between the Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL in the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006).

5. Violent incidents continued to occur across the Lebanese-Syrian border during the reporting period, although casualties decreased substantially. At least three Lebanese citizens, including a child, were killed by shots fired from the Syrian Arab Republic, while forces of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic were responsible for further incidents of cross-border shelling that caused material damage. The Lebanese Armed Forces reported continued smuggling of weapons

destined for the Syrian Arab Republic. Members of a group of fighters crossing from Lebanon into the Syrian Arab Republic were reported to have been killed by forces of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic near the Syrian town of Tal Kalakh. The Syrian authorities returned 10 bodies for burial in Lebanon. Nine of the pilgrims abducted on 22 May 2012 in the Syrian Arab Republic remain detained.

6. The incident in Tal Kalakh prompted a further round of fighting in Tripoli between the Sunni community of Bab al-Tabbaneh and the adjacent Alawite neighbourhood of Jebel Mohsen, which lasted from 4 to 10 December and left 17 people dead and more than 40 wounded. It was the sixth outbreak of violence in Tripoli since the beginning of 2012. On 4 February, a Lebanese court issued an arrest warrant for the head of the Syrian National Security Bureau, General Ali Mamlouk, in connection with the investigation into the Michel Samaha case, on which I have previously reported. On 20 February, a judge issued an indictment against the three suspects in the case.

7. The President of Lebanon led consultations with all Lebanese parties in the period after the assassination, on 19 October 2012, of Brigadier-General Wisam al-Hassan. The investigation into the assassination is continuing but no perpetrators have yet been identified. Members of 14 March maintained a boycott of the Government and of the National Dialogue, which did not meet during the reporting period. Preparations for parliamentary elections continued but were overshadowed by disagreements over a possible new electoral law. The elections are due in June.

8. The number of Syrian refugees in Lebanon continued to rise sharply. As at 25 February, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reported that in excess of 305,000 Syrian refugees were receiving assistance in Lebanon, more than double the figure cited in my previous report and the highest number in any of the countries neighbouring the Syrian Arab Republic. In addition, some 31,500 Palestinian refugees had been displaced from the Syrian Arab Republic into Lebanon. I discussed the efforts and needs of Lebanon in tackling the challenge of refugee inflows in my meetings with the President, on 30 January in Kuwait City on the margins of the International Humanitarian Pledging Conference for Syria, and with the Prime Minister, Najib Mikati, on 25 January in Davos, Switzerland, on the margins of the World Economic Forum.

II. Implementation of resolution 1701 (2006)

A. Situation in the Force's area of operations

9. The situation in the Force's area of operations generally remained stable during the reporting period. Calm prevailed along the Blue Line and the parties worked closely with UNIFIL to strengthen liaison and coordination arrangements. A few incidents did occur, however, with the potential to spark a serious escalation.

10. The outbreak of conflict in the Gaza Strip and southern Israel on 14 November significantly raised tensions along the Blue Line. UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces acted immediately to increase their patrolling activities, with a focus on preventing any hostile activities in the area. On 19 November, the Lebanese Armed Forces informed UNIFIL that they had discovered and dismantled two 107-mm rockets ready to be fired from a crude launching platform in the area between

Mazraat Islamiye and Darjhat (Sector East). On 21 November, UNIFIL heard explosions in Sector East of its area of operations and received information from both the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Israel Defense Forces shortly thereafter that two rockets that had been fired towards Israel from the vicinity of Al Mansurah, located north of the Litani River outside the UNIFIL area of operations, had landed near Sarda in Lebanon, just north of the Blue Line. The Lebanese Armed Forces located the launching site the following day, where they also found a third rocket that had failed to launch. To date, the points of impact have not been located. UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces are currently investigating the incidents.

11. On 17 December, an explosion occurred in the vicinity of Tayr Harfa, approximately 2 km north of the Blue Line (Sector West). Local authorities told UNIFIL that the explosion related to the controlled demolition of a cluster bomb. UNIFIL and Lebanese Armed Forces patrols sent to locate and investigate the explosion were temporarily prevented from reaching the suspected location by a large number of vehicles parked on the road. UNIFIL was able to gain access to the site within two hours of the explosion. Its investigation team observed that the ground at the site had been levelled recently with fresh soil, with clear signs of bulldozer tracks. UNIFIL has requested authorization to excavate the site and additional information from the Lebanese Armed Forces. Its investigation is continuing.

12. The Israel Defense Forces continued to violate Lebanese airspace almost daily during the reporting period, with overflights of Lebanese territory and territorial waters by unmanned aerial vehicles and fixed-wing aircraft, including fighter jets. On 29 January alone, there were some 34 air violations involving multiple fighter jets. On 28 November, at least six Israeli attack helicopters entered Lebanese airspace and flew at low altitude in the general vicinity of Tyre, an action that could have resulted in a serious security incident, in addition to putting at risk UNIFIL helicopters normally operating in the area. UNIFIL protested about all the air violations to the Israel Defense Forces, calling upon the authorities to cease them immediately. The Government of Lebanon also protested, while the Government of Israel continued to maintain that the overflights were a necessary security measure.

13. The Israel Defense Forces continued to occupy the northern part of the village of Ghajar and an adjacent area north of the Blue Line, in violation of resolution 1701 (2006). UNIFIL is still awaiting a response from Israel regarding security arrangements to facilitate the withdrawal of the Israel Defense Forces from the area, proposed to both parties on 25 June 2011. The Lebanese Armed Forces conveyed their approval on 19 July 2011, while the Israel Defense Forces indicated that the proposal would require the approval of the Government. Pending a response from the Government of Israel, UNIFIL is conducting bilateral consultations with the parties in an effort to facilitate the secure use by the local Lebanese population of the SD1 road, which lies just north of the occupied area. Among other security concerns, the Israel Defense Forces continue to express their concern about smuggling activities from Lebanon into Israel that allegedly pass through Ghajar. The overall objective remains the complete withdrawal of the Israel Defense Forces from northern Ghajar and the adjacent area north of the Blue Line.

14. During the reporting period, there were a number of ground violations of the Blue Line by Lebanese shepherds and farmers, primarily in the Shab'a Farms area and in the vicinity of Blida and Meiss El Jebel. While some of the violations were

inadvertent, others were committed by civilians claiming to own land south of the Blue Line. On 28 October, civilians violated the Blue Line near Bastara, in the Shab'a Farms area, by approximately 30 m and began to erect a fence around some olive trees. UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces subsequently established that the fence was south of the Blue Line, and UNIFIL removed the fence on 21 December. On 24 January, a Lebanese Member of Parliament, accompanied by some 18 civilians, including journalists, violated the Blue Line in the same area by about 15 m and delivered a press statement. UNIFIL lodged a protest regarding the incidents with the Lebanese Armed Forces. On 31 October, the Israel Defense Forces apprehended a shepherd alleged to have violated the Blue Line in another part of Shab'a Farms and returned him the following day. UNIFIL has shared the findings of its investigation into the incident with the parties for comment before finalizing its report. UNIFIL has appealed to both parties to refrain from taking unilateral action when violations occur and instead avail themselves of the UNIFIL liaison and coordination arrangements.

15. UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces continued their daily coordinated operational activities, including co-located checkpoints, coordinated patrolling and joint training exercises on land and at sea. UNIFIL conducted an average of almost 10,000 activities per month, including some 1,100 in close coordination with the Lebanese Armed Forces. UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces continued to carry out joint counter-rocket launching operations, which were increased during and in the aftermath of the Gaza conflict in November, at a monthly average of approximately 400 operations. For its part, UNIFIL continued to maintain seven co-located checkpoints along the Litani River and carried out regular helicopter patrols of its area of operations.

16. Owing to the multiple security responsibilities of the Lebanese Armed Forces throughout the country, the Armed Forces deployment in the area of operations remained at the same level as during the preceding period, consisting of approximately two brigades and two battalions, in addition to support elements. The Armed Forces face challenges in undertaking new tasks with UNIFIL in southern Lebanon owing to a lack of capacity, including a shortage of barracks and equipment. As part of its efforts to help the Armed Forces to enhance their capabilities, UNIFIL donated generator sets, spare parts and fuel tanks to the units deployed in the area of operations.

17. UNIFIL generally enjoyed full freedom of movement throughout its area of operations during the reporting period. Nevertheless, there were a few incidents when that freedom was challenged by local civilians. On 29 November, a UNIFIL patrol was blocked by a group of civilians in Rshaf (Sector West), after the patrol inadvertently approached a mosque for women. The civilians became aggressive when the UNIFIL personnel refused to alight from their vehicles and caused costly damage to the vehicles' exteriors. On three separate occasions (31 October, 12 December and 6 January), there were incidents in Ayta ash-Sha'b, during which UNIFIL patrols were blocked by civilian vehicles and United Nations and personal equipment and items were taken forcibly from UNIFIL personnel. On the third occasion, UNIFIL personnel and visiting international journalists were held for an hour by local civilians before being allowed to leave. On 9 February, a UNIFIL mine-clearance team was obstructed near Blida (Sector East) by a group of civilians. Following a scuffle with a peacekeeper, the civilians snatched a camera. Another incident involved an attempt by a civilian to rob UNIFIL personnel by pointing a shotgun at a UNIFIL vehicle.

18. In most cases, Lebanese Armed Forces personnel swiftly arrived on the scene and played a critical role in bringing the incidents to an end. They were able to retrieve some of the confiscated equipment and return it to UNIFIL. They also arrested the civilian who attempted to rob a UNIFIL patrol at gunpoint.

19. In another incident, on 26 January, a logistics convoy taking UNIFIL civilian personnel from Beirut to the area of operations mistakenly left the designated route and, when it sought to turn back, was stopped by a group of individuals armed with assault rifles in the vicinity of Mazraat el Aarqoûb, outside the area of operations. The armed individuals briefly held the convoy, searched all UNIFIL personnel and took some electronic equipment before escorting it back to the designated route.

20. UNIFIL lodged a protest about all the incidents with the Lebanese Armed Forces and emphasized to the Lebanese authorities that the primary responsibility for ensuring the Force's freedom of movement and the safety and security of its personnel lay with them. During the reporting period, UNIFIL continued to focus the attention of the Lebanese military judicial authorities on outstanding investigations into such incidents. The Force Commander took up the matter with the Commander of the Lebanese Armed Forces, General Jean Kahwaji, and other senior security officials. He also addressed local authorities, representatives of military, security and Customs officials, and local parliamentarians on the importance of full freedom of movement and of support on the part of local communities for UNIFIL. All his interlocutors emphasized their strong support for UNIFIL, as did the President during his visit to the Force's headquarters. UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces are currently working on a joint outreach initiative to further explain the Force's mandate and modus operandi to the local population.

21. These isolated incidents notwithstanding, the attitude of the local population towards UNIFIL remained positive. Through its regular liaison activities with local communities, UNIFIL helped to address issues with the potential to trigger tensions inside the area of operations. For example, it actively facilitated and contributed to the construction of a water storage tank near the Blue Line in Blida (Sector East). As part of its activities aimed at building confidence among the local population, UNIFIL continued to provide community services such as medical, dental, veterinary and educational assistance and to implement quick-impact projects. It also coordinated with a wide range of civilian actors in planning and organizing joint outreach activities, including two trade fairs with local agricultural cooperatives, and events on the occasion of the international days for peace, gender and security, children and persons with disabilities.

22. UNIFIL continued to provide assistance to the Lebanese Armed Forces in taking steps to establish an area free of armed personnel, assets and weapons, other than those of the Government of Lebanon and of UNIFIL, between the Blue Line and the Litani River. This continues to be a long-term objective. The above-mentioned rocket incidents demonstrate that weapons and hostile armed elements ready to use them remain, including in the UNIFIL area of operations.

23. The Government of Israel continued to allege that Hizbullah had been building up its military positions and units inside populated areas in southern Lebanon and that unauthorized weapons were being transferred into Lebanon, including into the UNIFIL area of operations. Where specific information is received regarding the illegal presence of armed personnel or weapons inside its area of operations, UNIFIL, in cooperation with the Lebanese Armed Forces, remains determined to act

with all means available within its mandate and to the full extent provided for in its rules of engagement, as described in my previous reports. UNIFIL does not, however, proactively search for weapons in the south. It visits locations after receiving an alert, in coordination with the Lebanese Armed Forces. According to its mandate, UNIFIL cannot enter private property unless there is credible evidence of a violation of resolution 1701 (2006), including an imminent threat of hostile activity emanating from that specific location.

24. During the reporting period, UNIFIL observed unauthorized armed personnel and weapons in its area of operations in violation of resolution 1701 (2006) on a number of occasions. As described above, there were two rocket incidents and an explosion in the vicinity of Tayr Harfa. UNIFIL is not in a position to determine whether the rockets discovered in the area of operations during the reporting period were smuggled into or already present in the area. To date, UNIFIL has neither been provided with, nor has found, evidence of the unauthorized transfer of arms into its area of operations. The Lebanese Armed Forces command continued to state that it would act immediately to put a stop to any illegal activity in contravention of resolution 1701 (2006) and relevant Government decisions. Several items of unexploded ordnance from the 2006 war and earlier were discovered by civilians, the Lebanese Armed Forces and UNIFIL personnel. On one occasion, a damaged box of eight grenades with Hebrew inscriptions was discovered. In all cases, Lebanese military specialists destroyed the ordnance.

25. A number of civilians were observed by UNIFIL carrying hunting weapons and engaging in hunting activities. On a few occasions, the Lebanese Armed Forces detained the hunters and confiscated their weapons. In other cases, the hunters swiftly left the scene after being spotted by UNIFIL or Lebanese Armed Forces patrols. The Lebanese Armed Forces released a press statement on 24 November in which they reaffirmed the ban on hunting, in particular inside the UNIFIL area of operations.

26. The UNIFIL Maritime Task Force continued to carry out its dual mandate of conducting maritime interdiction operations in the area of maritime operations and training Lebanese navy personnel. Since my previous report, the Lebanese navy and Customs officials have inspected 307 vessels in order to verify that there were no unauthorized arms or related materiel on board. The Maritime Task Force and Lebanese naval forces conducted 13 workshops on land and 20 at-sea training exercises. Lebanese navy personnel continued to develop their capabilities through the conduct of eight on-the-job training exercises in maritime interdiction operations. There were some limitations to joint activities resulting from the lack of adequate Lebanese navy vessels that could endure the inclement weather conditions.

27. There were a number of incidents along the line of buoys. UNIFIL observed Israeli navy units dropping 10 depth charges and firing 3 flares, in addition to warning shots on 10 occasions, along the buoy line, reportedly to ward off Lebanese fishing boats in the vicinity of the line. UNIFIL has no mandate to monitor the line, which the Government of Israel installed unilaterally and which the Government of Lebanon does not recognize.

B. Security and liaison arrangements

28. The Force's liaison and coordination arrangements with the parties continued to function well and on several occasions both parties sought to further develop security and liaison arrangements with UNIFIL.

29. Daily interaction and liaison activities between UNIFIL and the Lebanese Armed Forces continued at their established high and effective level. UNIFIL also maintained effective liaison and coordination with the Israel Defense Forces, although there was no progress in establishing a liaison office in Tel Aviv.

30. The tripartite forum remained the key mechanism for addressing security and military operational issues relating to the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). In addition to serving as a forum for discussion of violations and incidents that occur between the parties, the forum is a confidence-building mechanism. It offers a platform through which UNIFIL can facilitate practical arrangements and localized understandings on the ground between the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Israel Defense Forces that would remove possible points of friction, defuse tension in potential flashpoints, stabilize the situation and build confidence.

31. Following consultations in the tripartite forum, UNIFIL, for example, cleared debris that was blocking water from running through a culvert close to the Blue Line and restored the flow of water to prevent the flooding of local farmland near Kfar Kila (Sector East). UNIFIL continues to work with the parties to put in place a more sustainable solution that will prevent future flooding of this area. It is also exploring ways to relieve tensions in Bastara, where local farmers cultivate olive trees south of the Blue Line, and build confidence along the Hasbani/Wazzani River, where local entrepreneurs have established a series of resorts on the Lebanese side of the river along the Blue Line, as previously reported.

32. Progress in visibly marking the Blue Line continued at a steady pace. As at 13 February, the number of points agreed between the parties for marking stood at 257, of a total of 473. UNIFIL has to date cleared access to 234 points, 201 of which have been measured. Some 163 markers have been constructed and 145 verified by both parties. In accordance with the recommendations of the strategic review, UNIFIL began exploratory bilateral discussions with the parties to address those points along the Blue Line that had been deemed contentious or problematic. In agreement with the Israel Defense Forces and the Lebanese Armed Forces, UNIFIL also initiated refurbishment works of the previously constructed Blue Line markers.

33. After the Israel Defense Forces and the Lebanese Armed Forces expressed their interest in exploring ways to tackle questions of maritime security with UNIFIL, as mentioned in my previous report, the Force initiated preliminary bilateral consultations with the parties with a view to ascertaining their respective positions and identifying potential commonalities. On the basis of those preliminary discussions, UNIFIL also began work on a draft proposal for practical maritime security arrangements that it plans to share with the parties for their comments.

34. In line with the priorities identified by the strategic review, UNIFIL continued to work closely with the Lebanese Armed Forces to increase capacity through the strategic dialogue mechanism. The strategic dialogue remains a separate but integral component of the overall Lebanese Armed Forces capability development plan. UNIFIL, in close coordination with the Office of the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon, continued exploring the possibility of establishing a coordination mechanism between UNIFIL, the Lebanese Armed Forces, the Government of Lebanon and international donors, including troop-contributing countries and other Member States, to ensure a comprehensive approach and provision of support to the strategic dialogue mechanism.

C. Disarming armed groups

35. Resolution 1701 (2006) calls for the full implementation of the relevant provisions of the Taif Agreement, and of resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1680 (2006), which require the disarmament of all armed groups in Lebanon, so that there will be no weapons without the consent of the Government of Lebanon and no authority other than that of the Government of Lebanon.

36. The maintenance of arms by Hizbullah and other groups outside the control of the Lebanese State, in violation of resolutions 1559 (2004), 1680 (2006) and 1701 (2006), continues to restrict the State's ability to exercise full sovereignty and authority over its territory. Hizbullah has continued to acknowledge openly that it maintains a substantial military capacity separate from that of the Lebanese State. It claims that its arms serve as a deterrent against potential aggression from Israel.

37. The further round of violence in Tripoli from 4 to 10 December and other violent incidents involving arms during the reporting period again demonstrated the threat posed by the proliferation of arms outside the control of the State. The sixth round of violence in Tripoli in 2012, the intensity of the violence and the heavy calibre weapons used marked a worrying escalation. Calm was restored after the Lebanese Armed Forces deployed heavily in the neighbourhoods affected and at strategic points around the city following the adoption, on 9 December, of a new security plan by the Higher Defence Council. Although the situation has since remained generally calm, there was an incident on 18 January involving a convoy carrying the Minister for Youth, Faisal Karami, which left five people injured.

38. The Lebanese Armed Forces have continued to deploy as needed elsewhere to defuse political tensions, subdue violence and act against those responsible for it. On 12 November, they deployed to contain an outbreak of violence in Sidon after a clash between Hizbullah supporters and followers of Sheikh Ahmad al-Asir left three people dead and at least four wounded. The Lebanese Armed Forces sustained casualties and losses in their efforts to maintain law and order, including on 1 February when two soldiers were killed in a raid to arrest a wanted militant in Arsal. The attack was broadly condemned and efforts to arrest the perpetrators continue.

39. The President remained strongly committed to the resumption of the National Dialogue, which has not met since 20 September. At that time, he had presented a paper setting out an initial vision for a comprehensive national defence strategy centred on the principle of the exclusive right of the Lebanese Armed Forces to the use of force and frameworks and mechanisms for control and use of arms belonging to Hizbullah. The 14 March leadership has declined to participate in the meetings since the assassination of Brigadier-General Wisam al-Hassan on 19 October.

40. There was no progress in the dismantling of military bases maintained by the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command and Fatah al-Intifada. In 2006, the National Dialogue decided that those bases should be dismantled and the United Nations has repeatedly supported that call. The existence of the bases continues to compromise Lebanese sovereignty and impede the ability of the State to monitor effectively and control parts of the Lebanese-Syrian border.

41. In the Ein el-Hillweh Palestinian refugee camp there were heightened tensions on 23 January and again on 18 and 19 February between groups respectively loyal to the regime and the opposition in the Syrian Arab Republic. The clashes were relatively limited and contained by the Palestinian security committee in the camp. Otherwise, the situation in the camps was generally quiet. On 22 January, the Government of Lebanon undertook to fund the Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee for three years.

D. Arms embargo and border control

42. In resolution 1701 (2006), the Security Council decided that all States were to prevent the sale or the supply of arms and related materiel to entities or individuals in Lebanon by their nationals, or from their territories or using their flag vessels or aircraft. It also called upon the Government of Lebanon to secure its borders and other entry points so as to prevent the entry into Lebanon without its consent of arms and related materiel.

43. Representatives of the Government of Israel have consistently alleged that there are significant, continuing arms transfers to Hizbullah across the Lebanese-Syrian border. The United Nations takes these allegations seriously but is not in a position to independently verify them. Following elections in Israel in January 2013, members of the Government of Israel publicly stated that the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic intended to transfer advanced weapons systems and, potentially, non-conventional weapons to Hizbullah. Ministers warned that such arms transfers would constitute a significant threat and that Israel would act to prevent them from taking place. Senior representatives of Hizbullah maintained that they had no intention of acquiring chemical weapons.

44. In a letter dated 31 January 2013 (A/67/721-S/2013/70), the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic reported that, on 30 January, Israeli aircraft had violated Syrian airspace and bombarded a scientific research centre located near Damascus. He rejected media reports in which it had been asserted that the aircraft had targeted a convoy that was heading from the Syrian Arab Republic to Lebanon. While the United Nations has no details of and is not in a position to independently verify the events, I noted the reported incident with grave concern and called upon all concerned to prevent tensions or their escalation in the region and to strictly abide by international law, in particular in respect of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all countries in the region.

45. The Lebanese Armed Forces continued their efforts to counter smuggling from Lebanon into the Syrian Arab Republic. There were recurrent incidents of cross-border fire. Syrian armed forces fired small arms and heavier weapons into Lebanon and, on at least three occasions, an exchange of fire was initiated from Lebanese territory. On 25 December, a Lebanese child was killed by small arms fire into Lebanon from across the border. Between 23 and 24 February, at least two Lebanese men were killed by fire from the Syrian Arab Republic, prompting the President of Lebanon to file a protest, demand the cessation of firing and shelling towards Lebanon and stress the need for continued commitment to the policy of neutrality adopted by Lebanon. The movement of arms and fighters across the Lebanese-Syrian border continued. On 1 November, a Syrian national was killed and a number of Lebanese security personnel injured in a firefight after a vehicle attempted to

enter Lebanon illegally near the town of Arsal. On 30 November, a group of fighters, comprising 13 Lebanese, 3 Syrians and 1 Palestinian, was reportedly killed by Syrian regime forces at Tal Kalakh after they had crossed into the Syrian Arab Republic from Lebanon. On 17 February, there were reports of heavy cross-border fire in the northern Beqa'a Valley that was linked to fighting in nearby villages in the Syrian Arab Republic. There were further reports of Hizbullah fighters being killed, apparently in fighting in the Syrian Arab Republic, at that time and previously.

46. The movement of armed groups and weapons across the Lebanese-Syrian border and the recurrent cross-border incidents again highlighted the need for the Lebanese security forces to have greater means at their disposal to manage and control the border. Donors announced additional assistance for the Lebanese authorities in that regard, some of it dedicated to continuing long-term efforts to strengthen and integrate border management involving all the relevant branches of the Lebanese security forces. The Lebanese Armed Forces have continued to work on a $1.6 billion plan to increase their capacity and capability. The plan has been presented within the Government at a high level and is expected to be submitted formally to donors soon. It looks to national and international funding to meet what are pressing needs.

47. There was a substantial rise in the Syrian refugee population in Lebanon during the reporting period, including after the intense fighting around Damascus in December. Of the 305,000 refugees officially receiving assistance in Lebanon, 78 per cent are estimated to be women and children. There was a notable increase in the presence of refugees south of the Litani River, with some 4,200 refugees registered in the area. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees is planning to open a registration office in Tyre in the coming weeks. In all areas, winter conditions made shelter a priority, and the shortfall in available assistance noted in my previous report became acute.

48. On 3 December, the Government of Lebanon unveiled a plan to address the needs of Syrian refugees, resisting calls to close the border to prevent further influxes. In the same month, the United Nations submitted a revised regional plan that included an appeal for $267 million for Lebanon. I chaired the International Humanitarian Pledging Conference for Syria, held on 30 January in Kuwait City, at which donors pledged in excess of $1.5 billion to support Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries, including Lebanon, and those displaced by the conflict inside the Syrian Arab Republic. In Lebanon, the United Nations humanitarian presence grew rapidly on the ground and intensive efforts were made to accelerate registration.

49. Palestinian refugees continued to seek shelter in camps in Lebanon after their camps in the Syrian Arab Republic came under attack. There was a large influx of Palestinians into Lebanon from 17 to 20 December, including after the intense fighting in the Palestinian-populated Yarmouk area of Damascus. As at 25 February, some 31,500 Palestinians from the Syrian Arab Republic had approached the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) in Lebanon, including 5,200 Palestinian refugees from the Syrian Arab Republic who recently arrived south of the Litani River. UNRWA is seeking to provide assistance in cooperation with non-governmental organizations.

E. Landmines and cluster bombs

50. The Lebanon Mine Action Centre, a unit of the Lebanese Armed Forces, is the national authority for mine action in Lebanon with responsibility for the management of all humanitarian clearance and mine action data. The United Nations Mine Action Support Team is a United Nations Mine Action Service programme implemented in support of UNIFIL demining activities along the Blue Line by providing training to contingents, in addition to conducting validation and quality assurance monitoring. Eight military manual clearance teams, three military explosives ordnance disposal teams and one military mechanical clearance team are currently deployed in the UNIFIL area of operations. More than 809.94 m^2 of lanes providing access to Blue Line points were cleared during the reporting period. In addition, 10 anti-personnel mines and an item of unexploded ordnance were found and destroyed, while 2 Blue Line points were cleared and the clearance of 2 others began. Meanwhile, the United Nations Mine Action Service continued to conduct training for UNIFIL military and civilian personnel, in addition to quality assurance visits to operational sites and demonstrations.

F. Delineation of borders

51. There was again no progress towards delineating and demarcating the Syrian-Lebanese border, including in areas where it is uncertain or disputed, as called for by the Security Council in resolutions 1680 (2006) and 1701 (2006). Cross-border violence as a result of the Syrian crisis again highlighted the importance of delineation and demarcation as soon as practicable.

52. There was also no progress on the issue of the Shab'a Farms area. Neither the Syrian Arab Republic nor Israel has reacted to the provisional definition of that area contained in my report of 30 October 2007 on the implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) (S/2007/641).

III. Security and safety of the Force

53. UNIFIL and the Lebanese authorities continued to cooperate closely to ensure the safety and security of all UNIFIL personnel. Complementing the measures taken by the Government, UNIFIL continued to apply its own risk mitigation measures. It continuously reviewed its security plans and risk mitigation measures and carried out safety awareness training for its personnel. Physical infrastructure and equipment upgrades of UNIFIL headquarters are continuing to ensure the protection of the Force.

54. UNIFIL continued to observe proceedings in the Lebanese military court against suspects involved in cases of serious attacks, actual or planned, against UNIFIL peacekeepers, the latest of which took place in 2011. Appeal court hearings, concerning sentences handed down in October 2012 in the case of an intended attack against UNIFIL in 2008, were postponed again until July 2013 for procedural reasons.

IV. Deployment of the Force

55. As at 13 February 2013, the total military strength of UNIFIL stood at 10,826, including 383 women. The civilian component consisted of 337 international and 655 national civilian staff members, including 101 and 164 women, respectively. UNIFIL is also supported by 51 United Nations Truce Supervision Organization military observers of the Observer Group Lebanon, including 1 woman.

56. Since my previous report, Spain has reduced its contribution of troops to UNIFIL by some 25 per cent to 701 and announced a further reduction by May 2013. Meanwhile, Serbia has deployed an infantry platoon within the Spanish battalion under a bilateral agreement with Spain. In the course of the rightsizing of some UNIFIL units pursuant to the recommendations of the recent military capability study, Indonesia reduced its deployment from 1,446 to 1,188 troops.

57. The current composition of the Maritime Task Force is seven vessels (three frigates, one corvette and three fast patrol boats) and two helicopters. The new Brazilian flagship arrived on 13 January 2013. UNIFIL is awaiting the arrival of a new Indonesian vessel expected in April, which will bring the total number of Task Force vessels back to the requirement of eight.

V. Observations

58. I welcome the continuing calm in the UNIFIL area of operations and along the Blue Line. I commend the parties for preserving stability in the area amid the crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic and for demonstrating strong commitment to safeguarding the cessation of hostilities. Nevertheless, there were a few incidents that had the potential to spark a serious escalation. I urge both parties to continue working with UNIFIL to maintain the current calm, to minimize and halt violations, to look for practical localized solutions and to build on what has been achieved by strengthening the liaison and coordination arrangements between them.

59. I remain concerned at the lack of progress towards achieving a permanent ceasefire and long-term solution to the conflict, as envisaged in resolution 1701 (2006). In line with the requirements for the full implementation of that resolution, I hope that the parties will move from the current fragile cessation of hostilities and find that it is in their mutual interest to work towards achieving a permanent ceasefire and long-term solution to the conflict. I encourage all concerned to recommit themselves to that goal and to work with my Special Coordinator and UNIFIL to identify ways forward in this regard.

60. Major obligations under the resolution remain outstanding and require action by both parties. I am concerned that unauthorized weapons remain in the UNIFIL area of operations, in contravention of the resolution, as evidenced during the reporting period by the attempt to launch rockets from the area of operations. The explosion in the vicinity of Tayr Harfa during the reporting period also raises concern. The Lebanese authorities have the primary responsibility for ensuring that there are no unauthorized armed personnel, assets or weapons in the area. In this context, I also call upon both parties to cooperate fully with UNIFIL investigations to help to ascertain the facts of these incidents and violations by facilitating access to people, places and relevant information in their possession.

61. I remain concerned that violations of Lebanese airspace continue to be committed almost daily by Israel. The use of fighter jets and attack helicopters flying at low altitude during the reporting period raised particular concern. I call again upon the Government of Israel to cease all overflights of Lebanese territory and territorial waters. The continuing occupation of northern Ghajar and an adjacent area north of the Blue Line by the Israel Defense Forces also represents a continuing violation of resolution 1701 (2006). Israel has an obligation to withdraw its armed forces from the area, in accordance with resolution 1701 (2006).

62. The conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic continues to pose serious challenges for the security and stability of Lebanon. The lack of progress in delineating and demarcating the Lebanese-Syrian border is no justification for the serious and repeated violations of Lebanese territorial integrity, which have caused death, injury and material damage to property. I call upon the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to cease all violations of the border and to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Lebanon in accordance with Security Council resolutions 1559 (2004), 1680 (2006) and 1701 (2006).

63. The reported involvement of certain Lebanese elements in the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic is contrary to the policy of disassociation adopted by Lebanon. I note with grave concern reports of the Tal Kalakh incident involving Lebanese nationals and of further deaths of Hizbullah members fighting inside the Syrian Arab Republic. The dangers for Lebanon of such involvement and indeed of continued cross-border arms smuggling are obvious. I call upon all Lebanese political leaders to act to ensure that Lebanon remains neutral in respect of external conflicts consistent with their commitment in the Baabda Declaration.

64. I remain concerned about the political stalemate that has continued to prevail in the wake of the assassination of Brigadier-General Wisam al-Hassan on 19 October 2012. I commend the leadership of the President and his efforts to minimize political tensions and ensure continued stability in Lebanon in the face of the protracted conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic. I am concerned that disagreements over the electoral law have overshadowed the necessary preparations for the elections. I encourage all parties in Lebanon to work to ensure that elections are held on a consensual basis within the legal and constitutional time frame. The United Nations continues to provide technical support to those responsible for preparing the elections. I hope that the arrangements agreed upon will include measures to enhance the representation of women. I emphasize the importance of free, fair and credible elections in a timely fashion for the stability and continued political advancement of Lebanon.

65. The maintenance of arms by Hizbullah and other groups outside the control of the State continues to pose a threat to Lebanese sovereignty and stability, and stands in contradiction to the country's obligations under resolutions 1559 (2004) and 1701 (2006). I regret the inability of the Lebanese leaders to meet within the framework of the National Dialogue during the reporting period to discuss this and other issues and encourage all concerned to heed the President's call for the resumption of dialogue as soon as possible. I remain of the view that the goal of ensuring that there are no weapons outside the control of the State can be achieved only through a Lebanese-led political process that has this as its aim and believe that the National Dialogue remains the best mechanism to achieve it. In this context, I reiterate my call for the implementation of earlier decisions of the National Dialogue,

specifically those relating to the disarmament of non-Lebanese groups and the dismantling of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command and Fatah al-Intifada military bases.

66. I welcome the continued efforts of the Lebanese security forces to maintain stability throughout the country. It is important that they continue to receive needed backing from across the political spectrum for their work and that redoubled efforts be made to tackle sources of repeated violence, such as that which occurred in Tripoli. The recurrence of violent incidents underlines the extent to which Lebanon needs to take further specific steps to counter the prevalence of weapons outside the authority of the State and to ensure the effective implementation of resolution 1701 (2006). I remind all Member States of their obligations under that resolution to prevent the sale or the supply of arms and related materiel to entities or individuals in Lebanon except those authorized by the Government of Lebanon. I call upon the Lebanese authorities to hold accountable those involved in the violent incidents noted in the present and previous reports consistent with the extension of control of the Government over all Lebanese territory as called for in resolution 1701 (2006). I also reiterate the Security Council's call for the perpetrators, organizers, financiers and sponsors of the assassination of Brigadier-General Wisam al-Hassan to be brought to justice, together with those involved in the attempted assassination of political figures in 2012. It is unacceptable that political leaders in Lebanon should continue to have reason to fear for their lives. Steps must be taken to allay such fears.

67. I take this opportunity to welcome the unity shown by leaders in the Palestinian camps in Lebanon in working together, and with the Lebanese authorities, to maintain order against the backdrop of the crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic. I also welcome the decision of the Government of Lebanon to continue to support the Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee for a further three years. There is an urgent need to improve the living conditions of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, without prejudice to the resolution of the refugee question in the context of a comprehensive peace settlement. The influx of several thousand additional Palestinian refugees displaced from the Syrian Arab Republic into the already extremely cramped camps in Lebanon has imposed a heavy new burden on the inhabitants and on UNRWA in its efforts to assist them. I strongly urge Member States to further support the work of UNRWA in the light of the heavy additional pressures on its resources.

68. I pay tribute to the Government and people of Lebanon for their hosting of and assistance to the Syrian refugees and welcome the commitment of the Government to keeping its borders open to allow those displaced by the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic to seek refuge in Lebanon. The rate at which new refugees have crossed into Lebanon in the past two reporting periods has accelerated markedly and creates increasing challenges within the country. I call upon the international community to recognize the appeals of the Lebanese leadership in this regard and to provide assistance accordingly. Funds pledged at the International Humanitarian Pledging Conference for Syria should help to alleviate the burden on the Government and people and I thank all those who responded so generously to the appeals. Swift delivery of these pledges is now a key priority if the suffering of the refugees is to be alleviated and if Lebanon is to sustain its capacity to respond to increased numbers of refugees at the current rates of influx. I therefore urge the Government to continue to plan accordingly. The United Nations will continue to stand by Lebanon in tackling this challenge until such time as the refugees are able to return to their homes.

69. I am concerned about incidents restricting the freedom of movement of UNIFIL and instances of aggressive behaviour towards UNIFIL personnel. While the number of incidents is marginal relative to the overall number of operational activities conducted by the Force, some of these incidents are in violation of resolutions 1701 (2006) and 1773 (2007) and have the potential to escalate and compromise operations. The Force's freedom of movement is integral to the effective implementation of its mandate and the Lebanese authorities are primarily responsible for ensuring that UNIFIL can operate unhindered to this end.

70. The demands on the Lebanese Armed Forces during the reporting period have been heavy — in the south of the country alongside UNIFIL, along the border with the Syrian Arab Republic and in terms of internal security — and all have been against the backdrop of intense regional turbulence and consequent political and sectarian tensions inside Lebanon. It is encouraging that the Lebanese Armed Forces have, for the first time, at the prompting of the Government, sought to prioritize strategically their immediate needs in the light of these multiple challenges, including through the elaboration of a plan to enhance their capabilities.

71. I commend the Lebanese Armed Forces for their strong cooperation with UNIFIL, their multiple security responsibilities throughout Lebanon notwithstanding, in particular during periods of heightened tensions. I am grateful to those countries that continue to provide critical assistance and encourage the international community to demonstrate further its commitment to building the capacity of the Armed Forces, including the navy. In this context, it is imperative that UNIFIL and the Armed Forces remain focused on the strategic dialogue and that the process receive strong support from all national and international stakeholders.

72. I welcome the work carried out on the plan to enhance the capabilities of the Armed Forces and the efforts made to ensure that it reflects the requirements and objectives of the strategic dialogue. I encourage both the Government of Lebanon and the international community to be forthcoming in supporting the plan when it is finalized. I further stand ready to assist the Armed Forces and the Government of Lebanon as they seek to carry forward the plan. The United Nations will also continue to support the efforts of the Lebanese security agencies, in collaboration with donors, to improve integrated border management.

73. Regrettably, no progress has been made with regard to the Shab'a Farms area, in accordance with paragraph 10 of resolution 1701 (2006). I call, once again, upon the Syrian Arab Republic and Israel to submit their responses to the provisional definition of the Shab'a Farms area that I provided in October 2007 (see S/2007/641).

74. The focus on opportunities for oil and gas exploration in the eastern Mediterranean remained high during the reporting period, including on the potential benefits of exploitation of offshore resources for both Israel and Lebanon. I am hopeful that both countries can make progress on the delimitation of their respective maritime exclusive economic zones and make the necessary preparations for the exploration and exploitation of their resources in a manner that does not give rise to tensions. The United Nations stands ready to assist in this matter should both parties so request.

75. The Lebanese people have continued to show great resilience against the backdrop of regional developments and threats, in particular those relating to the crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic. They have shown generosity in receiving so many of those fleeing from that conflict. They are now preparing for important elections. The arrangements set in place by resolution 1701 (2006) are responsible in significant part for the stability, albeit fragile, that makes all this possible. These arrangements are also responsible for the unprecedented calm that has continued to prevail across the Blue Line between Lebanon and Israel since 2006. Longer-term security and stability call for an end to conflict in the region, including progress towards a just, lasting and comprehensive peace. Continued commitment and efforts by the Governments of Lebanon and Israel to the full implementation of resolution 1701 (2006) will remain vital through the current challenging period.

76. I wish to express my appreciation to all countries contributing troops and equipment to UNIFIL. I also commend the UNIFIL Head of Mission and Force Commander and the military and the civilian personnel of UNIFIL, in addition to the United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon and the staff of his Office, all of whom continue to play a vital role in helping to promote stability along the Blue Line and in Lebanon.

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Letter dated 27 February 2013 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to enclose herewith the Joint Statement of the first session of the Russian-Arab Cooperation Forum, held in Moscow on 20 February 2013 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would circulate this letter and the enclosed Joint Statement as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 36, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Vitaly **Churkin**

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Annex to the letter dated 27 February 2013 from the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General.

Joint Statement of the first session of the Russian-Arab Cooperation Forum

20 February 2013

The first session of the Arab-Russian Cooperation Forum on the level of Ministers for Foreign Affairs was held on 20 February 2013 in Moscow.

The meeting was chaired by His Excellency Mr. Sergey Lavrov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation (the host country), H.E. Dr. Adnan Mansour, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Emigrants of the Republic of Lebanon (presidency of the League of Arab States Ministerial Council), and H.E. Dr. Nabil Elaraby, Secretary-General of the League of Arab States (LAS). The League of Arab States was also represented by (the Forum mechanism) H.E. Nasser Al-Muzayyan, Ambassador of the State of Kuwait in Moscow (preceding presidency of the LAS Ministerial Council), H.E. Mr. Mohamed Kamel Amr, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Arab Republic of Egypt (next presidency of the LAS Ministerial Council), and H.E. Mr. Hoshyar Zebari, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq (presidency of the current Arab summit).

The most critical international issues and some major aspects of the current situation in the Middle East of mutual concern were discussed by the Ministers during the Forum. Deliberations took place in an atmosphere of openness and common will to achieve further development and strengthening of mutual cooperation between the Russian Federation and the member States of the League of Arab States, based on the foundations and principles stated in the Memorandum of Association of the Russian-Arab Cooperation Forum signed by the Russian Federation and the League of Arab States. The aim of the Forum is to ensure achieving the goals required to establish a solid and concrete partnership to serve the vital interests of both sides.

Regional and international issues

The Ministers participating in the Forum emphasized their adherence to maintaining international peace and security in accordance with the principles of international law and the central role of the United Nations and its Security Council. They reaffirmed the importance of developing relations between their countries in the spirit of good-neighbourliness and respect of the interests of each country.

The Ministers supported the legitimate aspirations of the people for a better life, broad political, economic and social rights, taking due account of the historical and civilizational particularities of each country and the observance of the universally recognized human rights. They reaffirmed their respect for the principle of State sovereignty and condemned all kinds of foreign intervention in the internal affairs of any State, and called for resolving outstanding issues and crisis situations exclusively through peaceful means.

The Ministers condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, irrespective of its motivations, and underlined that terrorism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, culture or ethnic group. They reiterated their determination to enhance cooperation in addressing the threat of global terrorism. They also welcomed the continuation of efforts aimed at strengthening the central role of the United Nations in international counterterrorism cooperation and the establishment of the international centre to fight terrorism under the umbrella of the United Nations in Riyadh.

In the context of discussions on regional security, the participants agreed that the issue of resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict is of paramount importance and should not be overshadowed by any other regional development. They reiterated their commitment to finding a comprehensive, just and lasting solution to this conflict using the recognized principles and provisions of the international legal framework, including the Charter of the United Nations, implementation of the Security Council resolutions, especially 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and the relevant General Assembly resolutions, the Madrid Principles, the road map, the Arab Peace Initiative and the concept of land for peace. The Ministers highlighted total rejection of all the unilateral Israeli actions aimed at altering the identity of Jerusalem, changing its geographic and demographic realities, and called upon UNESCO to exert efforts to preserve Islamic and Christian holy sites and secure them from repeated attacks, noting the efforts of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in the preservation of these holy sites.

The Ministers strongly condemned Israel's geographical and demographical changes in the occupied Arab territories, and regarded these changes as null and void, and consider them a blatant abuse of international law, international legitimacy, and United Nations resolutions. They also strongly condemned announced plans of the Israeli authorities to expand illegal settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories, including East Jerusalem, as the implementation of such plans could jeopardize the establishment of a viable Palestinian State, and called for a halt to all Israeli settlement activities and for the resumption of the Palestinian-Israeli talks on the above-mentioned basis aimed at establishing an independent, sovereign, viable and territorially contiguous Palestinian State on the basis of the borders of 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital, achieving a two-State solution with the two States living side by side in peace and security. In this context the Ministers highlighted the role of Russia in the international quartet, stressing the need to increase the Quartet's entrusted role.

The Ministers stressed the importance of putting an end to the Israeli occupation of all occupied Arab territories, which include Palestinian, Syrian and remaining Lebanese territories. They also called for a settlement of all outstanding final status issues of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict (water, security, borders, refugees and Jerusalem). The Ministers welcomed the ceasefire reached between the Gaza authorities and Israel on 21 November 2012 through Egyptian mediation and expressed their appreciation for the efforts made by Egypt in this regard.

The Ministers called for the immediate lifting of the ongoing inhumane blockade on the Gaza Strip and the release of all Palestinian and Arab prisoners and detainees in Israeli prisons, and called upon Israel for permanent regular release of all financial dues to the Palestinian Authority. The Ministers welcomed the General Assembly resolution granting to Palestine non-member Observer State status in the

United Nations as a step towards obtaining full membership. They welcomed Russia's willingness to host an international conference on the Middle East in Moscow upon agreement with all concerned parties. The Ministers expressed their strong support for all efforts aiming at achieving Palestinian national reconciliation, including meetings between the Palestinian factions in Cairo.

The Ministers expressed their deep concern regarding the critical situation the Syrian crisis has reached, resulting in thousands of victims and increasing numbers of displaced people and refugees both inside and outside Syria in addition to the vast destruction of the infrastructure and vital Syrian institutions, and the implications of this for the neighbouring countries, regional security and stability. They strongly condemned the continuation of bloodshed, its escalation and violations of human rights. They called upon all the parties concerned to exert necessary and urgent efforts in order to reach an immediate ceasefire, and stressed the need to adopt an appropriate approach regarding the deteriorating human situation in Syria and the urgent need to deliver humanitarian aid to the affected Syrian civilians, in addition to ensuring that this aid reaches increasing numbers of displaced people and refugees both inside and outside Syria. The Ministers commended the positive results of the international conference of donors for supporting the humanitarian situation in Syria hosted by the State of Kuwait on 30 January 2013. They also commended the Russian humanitarian assistance being granted to the Syrian people affected by the events in addition to all the assistance given by the Arab and other countries and international organizations to reduce the humanitarian implications for the Syrian people.

The Ministers reaffirmed their total respect for Syrian sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity and their rejection of any foreign intervention. They stressed the need to continue working and exerting joint efforts to halt the bloodshed of the Syrian people and to resolve the crisis on a political basis through encouraging all the Syrians to begin the dialogue process in accordance with the final communiqué issued in Geneva on 30 June 2012. This is to be achieved through a political process that will lead to forming a transitional governing body with full executive powers to steer the transitional period and transfer power within an agreed time framework, with the aim of recovering a normal life, security, stability and achieving freedom, democracy, political reform, social justice and human dignity.

The Ministers reaffirmed their ongoing support to the efforts of H.E. Lakhdar Brahimi, Joint Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States, aiming at reaching a peaceful solution for the Syrian crisis.

The Ministers stressed the need to exert all efforts to transform the Middle East into a zone free from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. They stressed the importance of implementing the outcomes of the final document of the 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, in particular implementation of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East. They reaffirmed the importance of Israel's accession to the Treaty and the placement of all its nuclear facilities under comprehensive IAEA safeguards and the urgency of achieving universality of the Treaty. The Ministers also urged all States in the region to take relevant steps to contribute to the realization of the objectives of the 1995 resolution on the Middle East and called upon all States to refrain from taking any measures that preclude the

achievement of this objective. In this regard they expressed deep concern over national statements of some organizers calling for the delay of the conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery, and confirmed their adherence to a serious and constructive approach to the goal of convening the conference in April 2013 at the latest, and noted their expectations that other relevant States would adopt the same approach to participate in the conference.

The Ministers agreed to exert their joint efforts to organize a conference in accordance with the mandate and framework agreed upon at the 2010 Review Conference.

The Ministers expressed their concern over the lack of progress in resolving the issue of Iran's nuclear programme and called upon Iran to take constructive steps towards restoring the confidence of the international community in the peaceful nature of its nuclear programme. They also reaffirmed that every State has the inalienable right to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes in accordance with its rights and obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

The Ministers commended the efforts made by the new leaders of Yemen to implement the initiative of the Gulf Cooperation Council on the peaceful transfer of power, which was signed in Riyadh on 23 November 2011. They welcomed the work being carried out to facilitate the launch of the process of national dialogue in the country, reorganize the armed forces, overcome the severe humanitarian crisis and eradicate terrorism and extremism. It was stressed that the States guarantors of the agreements signed in Riyadh should take further effective steps to promote these primary objectives.

The Ministers welcomed the ongoing political process in Libya and the efforts made by the Libyans to restore a normal internal political climate and to establish new institutions on the basis of the principles of the rule of law, freedom and equality widely supported by all people. In this regard, they reaffirmed the importance of accelerated rehabilitation of the national armed forces and law enforcement agencies in Libya with a view to ensuring security and stability in the country, as well as strengthening its sovereignty and territorial integrity. The Ministers confirmed their support for a peaceful resolution between Iran and the United Arab Emirates over the three islands of Abu Musa, the Lesser Tunb and the Greater Tunb in accordance with international law and in particular the Charter of the United Nations and through direct negotiations between the parties.

The Ministers welcomed the signing of security and economic agreements between the Republic of the Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan, and stressed the critical importance of their practical implementation in full as a key step towards a stable and prosperous future for both nations and the need for continued hard work to help the two States to reach a solution to outstanding issues between them, including the Abyei Area. The Ministers praised international efforts strongly supported by the League of Arab States, the African Union, and the United Nations in reaching the Darfur Peace Agreement and highlighted the role of UNAMID, and called upon the factions that had not yet signed the Doha Peace Document to do so, commending the outstanding role of the State of Qatar.

The Ministers welcomed the end of the transitional period in Somalia, expressing their appreciation for the progress achieved by the leaders and people of Somalia towards bringing an end to the transition. They renewed their commitment to help the

Somali Government to face different economic challenges and complete the ongoing national reconciliation efforts, stressing the importance of the unity, independence and territorial integrity of Somalia. The Ministers stressed the urgent need to encourage mutual understanding and respect among people of different religious and cultural identities, and the importance of regional and international initiatives aimed at promoting dialogue among civilizations, cultures and religions. They confirmed their support to the activities of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations and its upcoming Fifth Global Forum which is scheduled to be held in Austria, and they welcomed the initiative of World Interfaith Harmony Week, launched by Jordan and adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations; the establishment of the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, which was launched in Vienna on 26 November 2012; and the establishment of the International Center of Excellence for Countering Violent Extremism in Abu Dhabi on 14 December 2012.

The Ministers called for the adoption of effective measures aimed at the elimination of any form of intolerance and discrimination based on religion or ethnicity. They expressed the view that the concept of equal citizenship should be a basic foundation that constitutes communities' social fabric.

Bilateral cooperation

The Ministers expressed their interest in further coordinating their approaches to important regional and international issues, and underlined the importance of conducting regular meetings of the Joint Senior Officials Committee alternatively in Moscow and Cairo, to consult on issues of common interest and foreign policy.

The Ministers adopted a Joint Action Plan for the period 2013-2015 to implement the principles, goals and objectives of the Russian-Arab Cooperation Forum, seeking the development of their relations in accordance with the cooperation agreement and the memorandum of understanding between the two sides. The Joint Senior Officials Committee is tasked with monitoring the implementation of the Action Plan and submitting regular reports on the progress achieved.

The Ministers welcomed the growing economic cooperation between the Russian Federation and member States of the League of Arab States. They confirmed their interest in realizing a significant potential for bilateral business and investment interaction, including the fields of industry, energy and renewable energy, as well as nuclear energy, transportation, telecommunications, cooperation in different fields such as water, environmental protection, and agriculture, inter alia.

The Ministers emphasized the importance of developing touristic ties between the Russian Federation and the member States of the League of Arab States, stressing the need for further enhancing cooperation among relevant organizations and agencies.

The Ministers expressed their support for developing cultural cooperation, including enhancement of ties between relevant organizations of the Russian Federation and the member States of the League of Arab States, holding festivals, fairs and exhibitions on a reciprocal basis. They stressed the importance of preserving the Russian and the Arab cultural and historical heritage.

The Ministers called for increased educational cooperation, including through enhancement of ties among universities and other higher education establishments, participation in international scientific and cultural meetings to be held in the

Russian Federation and the Arab States. They also noted the importance of the development of scientific and technical cooperation between the two sides, as well as cooperation in the field of space science and technology, including the exchange of experiences, visits, joint scientific research, and technological projects.

The Ministers agreed to hold the forthcoming second session of the Forum in 2014 in one of the Arab capitals.

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The situation in the Middle East

Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories

Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources

Identical letters dated 28 February 2013 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, I wish to draw your attention to the following information:

Recent reports from various sources concur that the Israeli occupation authorities intend to move forward with an oil drilling project in the occupied Syrian Golan. The Israeli Ministry of Energy has authorized the American company Genie Energy to drill for oil in the area. The Israeli newspaper *Yedioth Ahronoth* stated in its issue of 21 February 2013 that the Israeli Minister of Energy, Uzi Landau, had agreed to an application from the Chief Executive Officer of Genie Energy to begin drilling.

The Syrian Arab Republic considers that, in taking such an illegal action, the occupying Power is in flagrant violation of Security Council resolution 497 (1981). It seeks to consolidate its occupation and annexation, whereas the Security Council determined that the Israeli decision to impose its laws, jurisdiction and administration in the occupied Syrian Golan Heights was null and void and without international legal effect, and demanded that Israel should rescind forthwith its decision. Israel's action contravenes all of the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and other international organizations, and, in particular, the General Assembly resolution entitled "Permanent sovereignty of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and of the Arab population in the occupied Syrian Golan over their natural resources."

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The Syrian Arab Republic deplores Israel's dangerous attempts to exploit the current circumstances in the region to consolidate its occupation of Syrian territory and plunder its resources. Israel is blatantly violating the principle of the permanent sovereignty of peoples under foreign occupation over their natural resources. The inalienable rights of peoples under occupation include sovereignty over their land, water and energy resources, which must not be exploited, depleted or wasted.

The Syrian Arab Republic emphasizes that, by ignoring Israel's illegal practices and its continuing violations of Security Council resolutions, the international community has encouraged Israel yet again to challenge the credibility of the United Nations and its binding resolutions.

The United Nations is now required to put an end to Israel's ongoing contempt for its resolutions and laws. The Organization must reject the double standards that grant Israel political immunity for its violations, allowing it to act as though it were exempt from its obligations under international human rights law and international humanitarian law in respect of the Syrian Arab population of the occupied Syrian Golan.

The Syrian Arab Republic therefore demands that the Security Council and General Assembly fulfil their functions by ensuring that Israel, the occupying Power, complies with its obligations under the Charter of the United Nations and under international law, which prevents occupying States from undertaking any activities that could harm the integrity and natural, demographic and environmental characteristics of occupied territory.

Syria further notes that the company in question belongs to a State that is a permanent member of the Security Council. That State therefore has a dual responsibility to ensure that its companies comply with international law and the relevant Security Council resolutions.

Syria demands that the Council should go beyond mere formal condemnation of Israel's violation of Syrian territorial integrity, and establish a mechanism compelling Israel to respect and implement Security Council resolution 497 (1981) and all other international resolutions concerning the occupied Syrian Golan.

Lastly, the Syrian Arab Republic stresses that, by taking genuine action to prevent Israel from carrying out this latest act of aggression and provocation, the United Nations would uphold the credibility of its efforts to implement its resolutions on ending the Israeli occupation of Arab territories and establish a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the region in accordance with the peace process, whose parameters have been endorsed by the international community but relentlessly undermined by Israel.

I should be grateful if this letter could be issued as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 36, 53 and 61, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Bashar **Ja'afari**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative